Reaching refugee students p31
Far from normal: Life after Katrina p36
NEA MIT Summary Annual Report p52

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WHAT'S NEXT

Chris Gardner

George Lucas

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Reg Weaver

...and more lay out their vision for education's future as NEA turns 150.

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> VOLUME 25 > NUMBER 8 > 2007

features

COVER 24

WHAT'S NEXT

As NEA prepares to celebrate its 150th anniversary, we asked innovators in education, the arts, architecture, politics—and, of course, educators—to dish about what the future might hold for public education.

INTERVIEW

Health Matters 23

The role of the school nurse has changed as much as the students they serve, says the president of the National Association of School Nurses.

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Almost From Scratch 31

For some refugee students, their arrival in an American classroom isn't just their first time in a U.S. school. It's their first time in any school.

ASTRONAUT EDUCATOR

She's Gonna Need a Sub 34

For two decades, students paid close attention to teacher Barbara Morgan. Now a new group will be following her every move at work—ground control at NASA's Johnson Space Center.

WHERE WE TEACH

The Eye of the Storm 36

It's been over 18 months since Hurricane Katrina devastated St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana. Teachers and support professionals there explain why life is far from back to normal.

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> VOLUME 25 > NUMBER 8 > 2007

ESP

Under the Lights, ESPs Shine 21

Support professionals in New Jersey get noticed for their hard work, thanks to an Emmy-winning PBS show.

SPOTLIGHT

Orientation Station 40

How do you help immigrant students transition to life in American schools? Enter the newcomer center—now being used to help Asian Pacific Islander students in Hawaii.

MONEY

How Do You Score? 44

Your students aren't the only ones whose grades you should be keeping an eye on. Boosting your bottom line means learning your credit score. We've got money-saving tips, too!

PEOPLE

After the Fall 46

When two Oregon members went mountain climbing, they had no idea that a treacherous turn of events would make them—and their dog—celebrities.

LAST BELL

The Best of Both Worlds 64

Bilingual education teaches respect, confidence, and language skills.

departments

5 **Editor's Note**
7 **President's Viewpoint**
8 **TalkBack**
11 **UpFront** It's time to start taking action on NCLB.
19 **Leading the Way**
22 **State Report**
41 **Debate** Do students learn better in single-sex classrooms?
42 **Bulletin Board**
48 **2007 Representative Assembly**
53 **Resources**

57 EDUCATION MARKET
63 MARKETPLACE

ON THE WEB

150 YEARS OF PROGRESS www.nea.org/ref?3648
Look back at NEA's century and a half of history, with timelines, video, quizzes, and more.

LIFE AFTER THE STORM www.nea.org/ref?3647
View our audio slideshow to see how Gulf Coast schools are faring post-Katrina.

REACHING ELLs www.nea.org/ref?3627
From immigrants to refugees, the number of English-language learners is growing. Check out our resources to help you teach the ELLs in your class.

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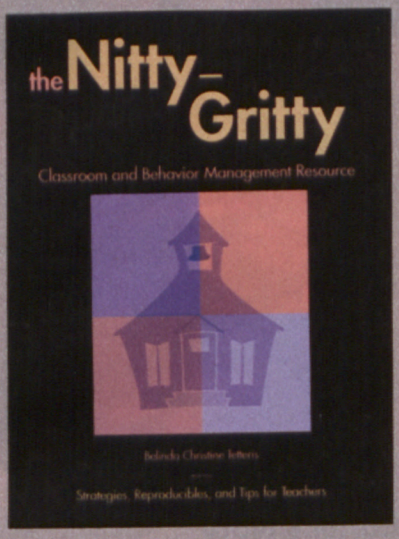
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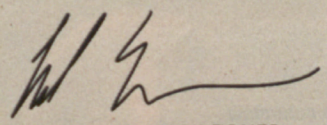
What's Next

It's been 150 years since 43 educators met in Philadelphia to forge a united voice for public education. Now, a century and a half later, educators face unprecedented change—in technology, our schools, and our students. But one thing hasn't changed—the optimism that brought us into the profession in the first place. As part of our look forward, we asked NEA members what they thought the future holds for public education. Math teacher Kat Crawford still believes that teaching can focus on "what gives life meaning." Special education teacher Charlene Christopher wants to fight for her students and future educators. Education support professional Jeri Stodola believes that every school in the country will provide the technology students will need to succeed in the years to come, while high school teacher Dawn Shephard Pope challenges herself to meet that promise by thinking outside the box. Thanks to them, and to everyone who's shared their stories during this school year. Please keep them coming, via the Web (www.neatoday.org) or e-mail (neatoday@nea.org). Here's to the future. It's going to be a bright one.



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We, the members of the National Education Association of the United States, are the voice of education professionals. Our work is fundamental to the nation, and we accept the profound trust placed in us.

OUR VISION

Our vision is a great public school for every student.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to advocate for education professionals and to unite our members and the nation to fulfill the promise of public education to prepare every student to succeed in a diverse and interdependent world.

OUR CORE VALUES

These principles guide our work and define our mission:

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY. We believe public education is the gateway to opportunity. All students have the human and civil right to a quality public education that develops their potential, independence, and character.

A JUST SOCIETY. We believe public education is vital to building respect for the worth, dignity, and equality of every individual in our diverse society.

DEMOCRACY. We believe public education is the cornerstone of our republic. Public education provides individuals with the skills to be involved, informed, and engaged in our representative democracy.

PROFESSIONALISM. We believe that the expertise and judgment of education professionals are critical to student success. We maintain the highest professional standards, and we expect the status, compensation, and respect due all professionals.

PARTNERSHIP. We believe partnerships with parents, families, communities, and other stakeholders are essential to quality public education and student success.

COLLECTIVE ACTION. We believe individuals are strengthened when they work together for the common good. As education professionals, we improve both our professional status and the quality of public education when we unite and advocate collectively.

Unfinished Business

As we celebrate NEA's 150th anniversary, we must look ahead.

This year marks the sesquicentennial of the National Education Association. That's a fancy way of saying that this is NEA's 150th birthday, and what a journey it has been!

NEA was born in one of the most troubled times of our nation's history—the eve of the Civil War. It was a time when the idea of universal public education as we know it today was still just that—an idea. Until the mid-1800s, school was still a privilege in most parts of the United States, and an education was an opportunity only open to the well-to-do.

That began to change after the Civil War, as reformers demanded that education be available for all children. And the NEA was a part of that fight. By 1918, every state had enacted a requirement for all students to attend at least elementary school, which was enough for most people at that time. As the pace of change accelerated through the 20th century, education became more important, and all along the way, our Association was at the forefront of the fight to expand and enhance public education.

From the very first day, NEA has fought not only to improve the lives of our members; we have fought to also enrich the lives of every child in America and to empower our children to reach for their dreams.

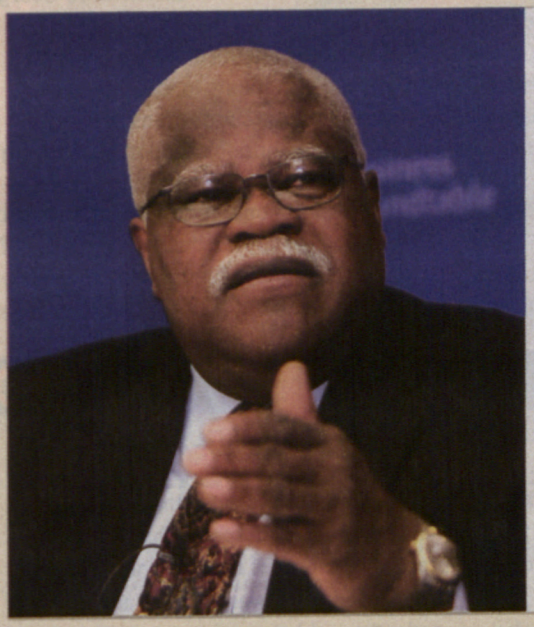
We're proud of that history. And we're proud of the fact that today, NEA is the largest organization of public school educators in the world. What makes us special, however, is not our storied past or our size. What makes the National Education Association special is our mission and the NEA members committed to advancing that mission.

We can all celebrate our organization's rich history and our varied accomplishments in the last 150 years. We can be proud to be part of an organization that led the effort to professionalize teaching, to ensure that all educators are treated with dignity and respect, and to improve educational achievement and attainment for all students, essential work that has made NEA a flagship for democracy and inclusiveness and so much more.

But can we rely only on the glories of our past to move us forward? Or shall we use our 150th year as a springboard for change?

In 1900, with our nation's economy built on farming and textile mills, the fact that fewer than 10 percent of the children in America graduated from high school wasn't really a problem. But we have now entered the era of the knowledge economy, in which a quality education will be more critical than ever. Today, the high school dropout rate has risen to crisis proportions, and Team NEA is leading the charge to address this shameful trend.

We have also launched a tenacious effort to close achievement gaps and provide public schools that are well-funded and world-class because we know that our ability to compete globally depends on how well we prepare all of our students—black, brown, or white, native born or immigrant, poor or prosperous.



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NEA was born in one of the most troubled times of our nation's history—the eve of the Civil War. It was a time when the idea of universal public education as we know it today was still just that—an idea.

—REG WEAVER

Rather than rest on past laurels, we are translating the lessons we've learned into sound, achievable policies that will truly help every child succeed. Last year we adopted a simple and powerful vision statement: a great public school for every student. Although this statement is new, the vision itself is not. It has always been the driving force behind the work of the National Education Association. And it will continue to be the driving force for Team NEA as we work together to realize this vision and continue our legacy of leadership into the 21st century.

Reg Weaver

NEA PRESIDENT REG WEAVER

Testing the Nerves

I read with interest your look at No Child Left Behind ("Testing: How the Sausage is Made," April). NCLB seems preoccupied with the concept that one child should fit all, or all children should fit one. As you pointed out, experts cannot even agree on meanings of terms in this maniacal drive toward fact recall. The National Assessment of Educational Progress says it all. After the money and time have been spent, we are left with little or no improvement and test coaching in place of learning.

BILL BOERST
Jamestown, New York

I will retire soon because of the insanity of social studies testing (November), ELA (February), math (March), science (April), and ESL retesting of students (May) who had to take grade-level ELA tests even though they don't speak English! NCLB has created a climate where teachers can't teach, and children are expected to learn from "drive-by" lessons. Take the test, take the test, take the test... that's all there is!

BARBARA PIGNATARO
Massapequa, New York

MILITARY RECRUITING

Having served in the military, I cannot understand why any American can oppose the exposure of young men and women to the service of their country ("Uncle Sam Wants...You?" April). I think the answer is in this quote from your article: "Those who haven't been exposed don't understand." What is wrong with giving a poor boy or girl a chance to grow physically and mentally and serve their country, too?

It is ironic that an article like this one is in the same magazine with the story about Auschwitz survivor Henri Landwirth. Without the American military, we could live in a totalitarian state. Those who "haven't been exposed" to the military but have been brainwashed to be anti-military truly do not understand.

JAMES TURNER
Chatsworth, Georgia

Surely it is unethical for a teacher to persuade students to join the military, and I find the suggestions in the recruiter's handbook repugnant. Making allies of teachers for the use of recruiting impressionable children into armed service is at best a deliberate misuse of an educator's influence, and at worst a manipulation of a life and death decision.

Factual discussions, pro and con, once or twice a year on campuses with the military present is all the exposure students need at this point in their lives. Let our children see a piece of American adult life, and if West Point is in their future, fine. We could all use a little more discipline in our lives, but you don't have to join the military for that.

CYNTHIA SPARKS
Dana Point, California

OFFSETTING PRIORITIES

"Offsetting Priorities" (March) discusses the unfair law in place called the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) in effect in many states, including Illinois. I would bet that many NEA members are

CYBER-COMMENTARY

SCRIPTED CONFERENCES

As a parent and employee of a school, parent-teacher conferences with kids are little more than a dog and pony show. Teachers spend classroom time rehearsing with the kids what they are going to say and telling them (the students) what their goals are going to be! Who is the conference for, the student, parents, or teacher?

I agree it's very nice to see what hard work (or lack thereof) students produce, but does everyone need to waste their time going through such a staged event? An involved parent should know what kind of work their child is producing and if it isn't good work, a responsible teacher will be on the phone with the parents regularly.

SILENT LUNCHES?

Our students used to eat in the classrooms [because of a] lack of space. That was a practice that most of our elementary schools participated in for over 20 years, and now the students are able to eat in a small lunchroom. However, during lunch the noise can get deafening! The teachers that monitor the lunch period are demanding these students whisper during lunch or not talk at all. I think that is unrealistic. We all need to socialize and unwind, and during meals is an opportune time to do this!

—FROM THE NEA.ORG DISCUSSION BOARDS

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not aware of this law, which, among other things, reduces Social Security pensions for teachers. I feel proud to be one of these people who left the workplace after many years to become a teacher. Unfortunately, when I retire, not only will my teacher's pension be smaller because of fewer years teaching, but my Social Security benefits will also be reduced.

Why aren't more teachers young and old speaking out about this unjust law? Perhaps they are too tired at the end of a long day of educating our nation's youth. Perhaps too perplexed figuring out ways to incorporate more NCLB-mandated requirements into an already overloaded lesson plan.

Teachers, young and old, get informed. Everyone benefits when experienced professionals join the teaching ranks after spending many years in the workplace.

JERRY HUND
Bartlett, Illinois

CASTING CAUTION

I know times change, and I know more teachers and kids are using podcasts ("Podcasting the 1600s," March). But I am concerned that podcasts enable kids to avoid reading at a time when they need to read more.

GARY WILSON
North East, Maryland

ROOM FOR READERS

A major thought that was brought up in "Room for Readers" (February) was that librarians seem to be misused in many schools. They're used as book-shelvers and checkout persons, but not as co-educators. A library program should be an integrated part of the curriculum at all elementary schools.

WILLIAM HARRELL
Portsmouth, Virginia

LET'S TALK

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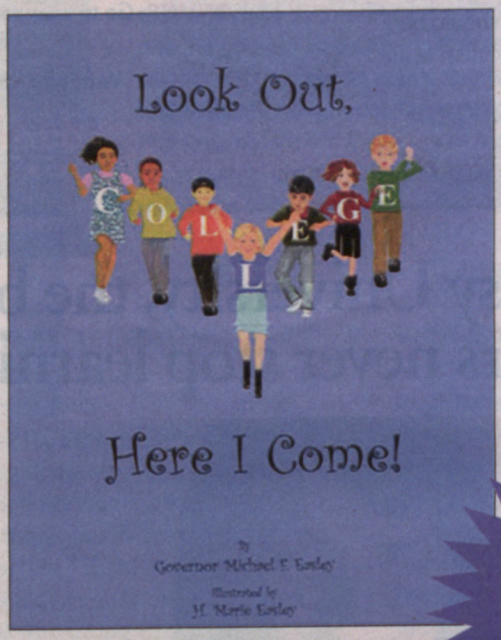

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Reg Weaver, NEA President

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(Take) Action!

It's time to stop suffering under NCLB and start changing it.

CONGRESS IS NOW CONSIDERING changes to No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the current version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The window of opportunity could close very quickly, so this is the time to act.

NEA President Reg Weaver presented NEA's "Positive Agenda" for changing the law at a special congressional hearing this spring. (See "Don't Be Left Behind," page 19.) In it, NEA proposes to keep NCLB's separate reporting of test scores for subgroups of students, so everyone can see where schools need to do better. But instead of putting so much weight on one-size-fits-all standardized tests and punishing schools whose students score low, NEA's proposal would use multiple measures of student learning to evaluate schools and offer educators real help to close achievement gaps.

Many groups are working alongside NEA to change the law, including school boards, state legislatures, and 115 education, religious, and civil rights organizations.

Bush Administration officials, however, still insist that NCLB only needs minor tweaks. If the law stays the same, studies show that almost every school will be declared failing by 2014 when every child must be "proficient."

ESEA expires this September, and the battle for a saner sequel could be won or lost in the next few months—perhaps even the next few weeks. The NEA Executive Committee has approved our top priorities for overhauling the law (www.nea.org/ref?3636).

The time to educate the public and Congress about what's happening in our schools is now:

> **E-MAIL** your U.S. Representative and Senators at www.nea.org/ref?3631 and give them your from-the-classroom view of NCLB.

> **WRITE A LETTER** to your local newspaper.

> **CONTRIBUTE** to the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education at www.nea.org/ref?3632 and help elect more pro-public education candidates to office.

12
THREE STEPS TO LONGEVITY

13
"IT'S NOT ENOUGH!"

14
A LIFESAVING GIFT

PHOTO OF WOMAN: GEORGE DOYLE & CIARAN GRIFFIN; MOVIE CLAPPER PHOTO: MORGAN LANE PHOTOGRAPHY

Three Secrets to a Longer Life

1) Take a break in the staff lounge.

A 10-YEAR STUDY in Australia found that older people with a network of close friends and confidantes outlived their lonely peers by 22 percent. Family ties don't matter quite as much. (Just try explaining that to your spouse when you stay at school until the wee hours.)

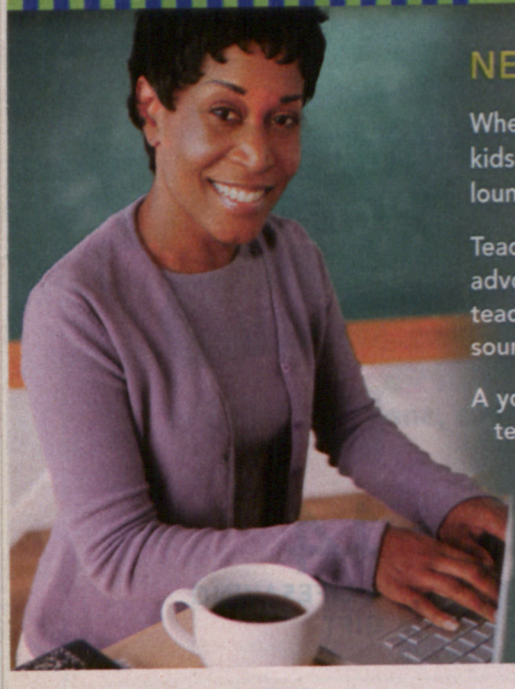
2) Quit smoking!

SMOKING CUTS life expectancy by 10 years, according to a British study that followed smokers for 50 years. Another study shows that a 30-year-old smoker can expect to live 35 more years, while a 30-year-old nonsmoker can expect to blow out 83 candles.

3) Stay in school!

BUT THE NUMBER-ONE, top-of-the-charts, most important social factor linked to longer lives is education. According to health economists, it beats race, wealth, or even good health insurance. Check out a Princeton University study that looks at the evidence, including research showing that kids forced to attend school for just one additional year usually pick up another year and a half of life! (See www.nea.org/ref?3523.)

CYBER-VENTING



NEW KIDS ON THE BLOG

When new teachers get fed up with the principal, the parents, the kids (oh yes, the kids!), not all take their beefs to the teachers lounge. Some turn to a more electric setting: their blog.

Teacher blogs, which now number more than 800, range from advocacy to anecdotal, and many belong to young, tech-savvy teachers. And while the online diaries do provide valuable space to sound off and get virtual community support, they also can be risky.

A young teacher in Arkansas lost his job after blogging about teaching wood shop without any equipment, *USA Today* reports. Another in Chicago quit after students learned he was the one writing about chaos in their school. To stay safe: Think before posting the negative stuff, and don't believe you're ever really anonymous.

COFFEE CUP: JOELLEN L. ARMSTRONG; CIGARETTE: NU; GRADUATION CAP: VOLODYMYR KYRYLYUK; TEACHER WITH LAPTOP: IMAGE SOURCE

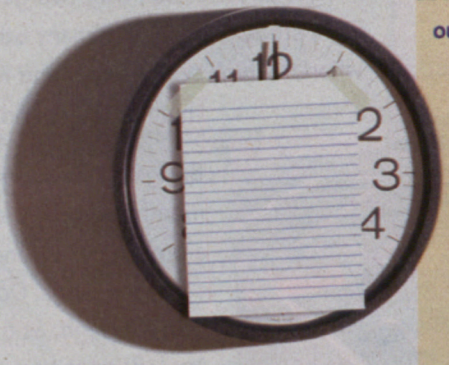
SEEING RED OVER TOO LITTLE GREEN

They came by bus and car, dressed in red, carrying signs and chanting, "It's not enough!" They mean it. Nearly 5,000 West Virginia educators gathered at the state Capitol in January to show the governor his proposed salary raise won't pay the bills.

THE 2.5 PERCENT RAISE proposed by the governor for teachers (but not education support professionals) wouldn't even generate enough money for him "to buy a flat screen TV for [his] mansion," said West Virginia Education Association (WVEA) President Charles DeLauder. The WVEA has called for 6 percent for all and a minimum salary of $30,000 for every teacher. Currently, the state's average teacher salary, $38,284, ranks 47th in the country (down from 30th in 1993), and is about $5,500 less than its neighbor, Virginia. That difference makes it hard to recruit and retain teachers—and they made that clear on the Capitol steps, shouting, "Six percent or I won't stay!"

The percentage of **TEENAGERS** in 2004 who had ever been **RETAINED A GRADE.**

SOURCE: NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS



Time's Up!

There's a teacher at Dedham High School near Boston who covers her classroom clock with paper. The problem? Since the school silenced its school bells last year, some students have become compulsive clock-watchers, counting the seconds until they can catch up between classes. Still, more and more schools are joining the silent bandwagon, with the goal of teaching real-world skills to students. (After all, bells don't ring in most workplaces!)

Notepad

They told you they'd be back, Arnold

California is trying a novel approach to closing stubborn achievement gaps: Give educators more resources.

Three years ago, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger "borrowed" billions of dollars earmarked for education, then reneged on a promise to give it back. But the California Teachers Association (CTA) went to court and to the legislature, ultimately winning passage of a bill restoring the total $2.9 billion.

The money will be distributed over seven years through competitive grants to 500 of the state's 1,455 lowest-scoring schools, $500 to $1,000 per student per year.

Eligible low-scoring schools have 134 percent more English-language learners than others in the state, 98 percent more students on free and reduced-price lunches, and 167 percent more students whose parents didn't graduate from high school. They have 8 percent fewer fully credentialed teachers.

"We've been talking for years about putting our money where our hearts are," says CTA President Barbara Kerr. "We want to see if lowering class sizes, providing quality teachers, and securing quality materials can make a difference. We believe it will."

Have a great idea?

> Send it by mail:
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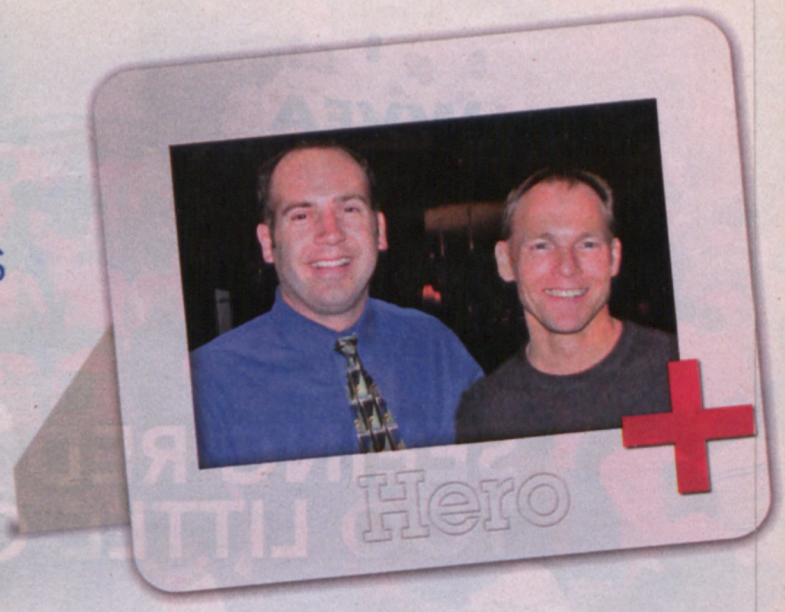
Washington, DC 20036

> Send it by e-mail:
neatoday@nea.org

WVEA PHOTO: KYM RANDOLPH/WVEA; CLOCK: PHOTODISC

A Colleague Comes to the Rescue



THESE TWO TEACHERS have more than their jobs in common. Since 2005, when Wisconsin teacher Tom Schaefer "matched" with Iowa teacher Chad Farner (at far right), they've also shared bone marrow.

Schaefer's anonymous donation was almost painless—"almost like if you fell down on your butt on ice," but he still became a hero to Farner, who was diagnosed with cancer in late 2004 and eventually met his lifesaver last year. "Now that I have Tom as a friend, I know that his marrow can only make me a better person," Farner said.

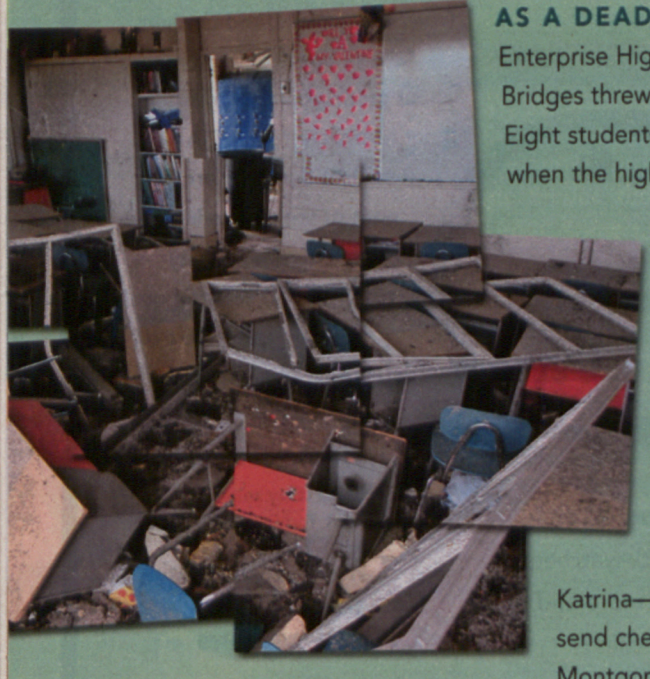
22

The percentage of **BLACK TEENAGERS** in 2004 who had ever been **RETAINED A GRADE.**

SOURCE: NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

THE FACE OF COURAGE

ALABAMA MEMBER RISKS HER LIFE TO SAVE STUDENTS



AS A DEADLY TORNADO ripped through Enterprise High School in Alabama, teacher Shannon Bridges threw herself over two girls to protect them. Eight students died, and many others were injured, when the high school's roof and walls collapsed on them as they huddled in a corridor.

Bridges, a 29-year-old botany teacher who was five months pregnant, suffered serious injuries, including a broken collarbone, ribs, liver damage, and collapsed lungs. Doctors later reported her baby was fine, although, as this issue went to press in early April, Bridges had a long recovery ahead.

The Alabama Education Association Foundation—originally created to assist members hit by Hurricane Katrina—is accepting donations for tornado victims. To donate, send checks to the AEA Foundation, P.O. Box 4177, Montgomery, Alabama 36103.

FARNER AND SCHAEFER PHOTO: COURTESY OF CHAD FARNER

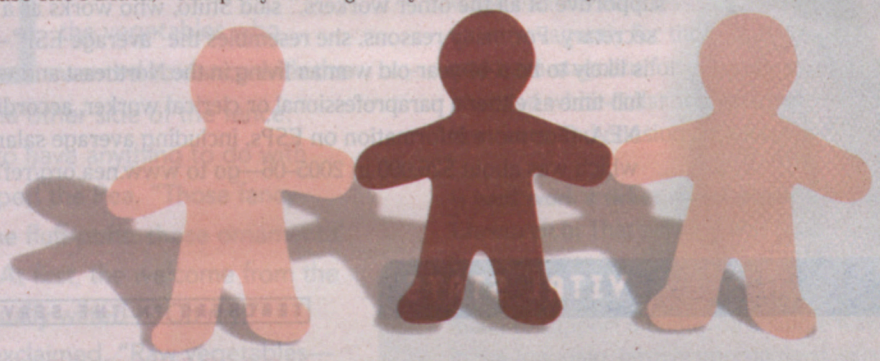
Playing with Perception

BACK IN THE 1950s, in the days of government-enforced school segregation when Black students were forced to use hand-me-down books in unheated classrooms, perhaps it wasn't surprising that they preferred to play with White dolls.

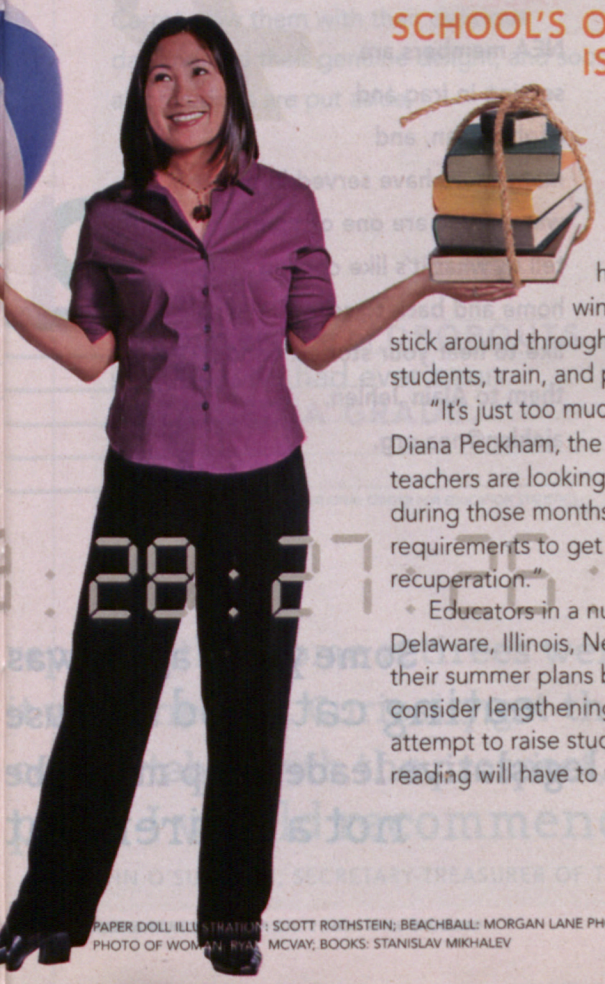
But today, in an award-winning amateur video called "A Girl Like Me" (www.reelworks.org/watch.php), New York City public high school student Kiri Davis asks, "How have we progressed since then?" The startling answer? Not much.

Davis replicated a well-known experiment, used as evidence in the *Brown v. Board of Education* desegregation case, that asks Black preschoolers whether they prefer to play with White or Black dolls. Decades later, 15 of 21 Black children still prefer the White doll—clear evidence that parents and teachers must continue to work on internalized racism and stigmatization.

"Can you show me the doll that looks bad? Why does she look bad?" Davis asks. "Because she's Black," one pony-tailed girl says matter-of-factly.



SCHOOL'S OUT FOR SUMMER...OR IS IT?



IT'S T-MINUS 30 DAYS until summer break for most, but teachers at Annapolis High School in Maryland might not be packing their beach bags or scheduling summer job hours just yet. The school superintendent this winter unveiled a plan calling for teachers to stick around throughout the summer to work with struggling students, train, and plan, in exchange for extra pay.

"It's just too much of an imposition on personal time," says Diana Peckham, the head of the school's faculty council. "Most teachers are looking forward to spending time with their children during those months. Many younger teachers are meeting course requirements to get further degrees, and older teachers need recuperation."

Educators in a number of states, including Minnesota, Delaware, Illinois, New Mexico, and Massachusetts, might find their summer plans being put on hold, too, as administrators consider lengthening the traditional 180-day calendar in an attempt to raise student achievement. Guess that summer reading will have to wait.

—NADINE SIMPSON

PAPER DOLL ILLUSTRATION: SCOTT ROTHSTEIN; BEACHBALL: MORGAN LANE PHOTOGRAPHY; PHOTO OF WOMAN: RYAN MCVAY; BOOKS: STANISLAV MIKHALEV

Global Takes

A Worldwide Cause

With posters, petitions to the U.S. Congress, and mock hearings and "teach-ins," Education International and NEA ensured that this year's Global Action Week (April 23–29) sent a clear, global message: Education is a human right. Unions worldwide spent the week calling for free, quality, basic education for all children by 2015. Advocates also created dossiers and gathered evidence of violations of children's education rights, then presented them to governments around the world.

Ethiopian Teachers Freed

Three Ethiopian Teachers Association members jailed and tortured since last December were finally released in late March. The men suffered severe beatings while imprisoned, were never given an explanation for their arrest, and were taken into court more than 10 times without movement in their case. Their lives are still disrupted. When two of the teachers returned to their schools they were asked by administrators for proof they'd been in prison. Police refused to provide any such proof to the men.

Education International, of which NEA is a member, joined Amnesty International in pressuring Ethiopian leaders with a global letter-writing campaign and will continue to monitor the case.

Want to share a story?

> **Send it by mail:**
> ***NEA Today***
> **1201 16th St., N.W.,**
> **Washington, DC 20036**

> **Send it by e-mail:**
> **neatoday@nea.org**

50,000th ESP

Welcome Aboard!

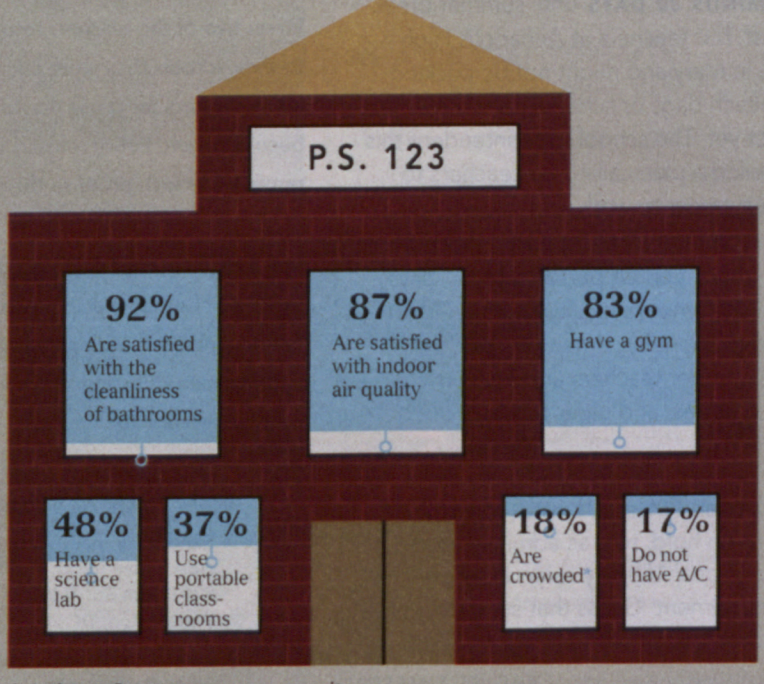
After years in the private sector, Prudence Stuto accepted a job last year as an education support professional in Jamesburg, New Jersey. She had a choice: To join or not?

NO CONTEST. And, with her registration in the Jamesburg Office Personnel Association, Stuto became New Jersey's 50,000th ESP member. "I came from private industry, so it's new for me, but I wanted to be supportive of all the other workers," said Stuto, who works as a board secretary. For many reasons, she resembles the "average ESP"—who is likely to be a 44-year-old woman living in the Northeast and working full-time as either a paraprofessional or clerical worker, according to NEA. (For more information on ESPs, including average salary—which was about $26,000 in 2005–06—go to www.nea.org/ref?3524.)

VITAL STATS

INSIDE THE WALLS

The bricks and mortar make a difference, don't they? Adequate learning space, clean classrooms, and other variables all have a direct impact on learning. **Here's what principals have to say about their schools:**



* At least 6 percent over capacity

SOURCE: NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

TEACHERS IN THE SERVICE

HOMECOMING TALES

NEA members are serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, and many more have served in past wars. If you are one of them, tell us what it's like coming home and back to school. We'd like to hear your stories. Send them to Alain Jehlen, ajehlen@nea.org.

"Some years ago it was eating cat food because legislative leadership might be not a retirement

BALLOONS: JOHN HOIST; STUTO PHOTO: JOE MURPHY/NJEA

BOOK FOCUS

In the Garden

Here's a lovely book to read aloud, especially as the flowers bloom in your schoolyard garden. *The Flower Ball* (Pumpkin House), written by Sigrid Laube and illustrated by Silke Leffler, tells the brave story of Cauliflower and Carrot, the vegetables who wanted to dance with the flowers on the other side of the fence. "Better not to have anything to do with them," snapped the Pea. "Those fancy-pansies, those fluff-puffs, those ornamental dandies...." At first, the welcome from the flowers is equally wilted—"Oh my!" [Carnation] exclaimed. "Raw vegetables—how dreadfully crude!" But Cauliflower and Carrot wow them with their delicious dancing and their genuine delight, and soon all prejudices are put aside.

Q&A

QUESTIONS FOR Barbara Ehrenreich

AUTHOR, JOURNALIST, SOCIAL CRITIC

Barbara Ehrenreich has written 18 books, including the bestseller *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. A Florida resident, her newest book is *Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy*.

Are workers in America paid enough to get by?

Ehrenreich: Not enough are. A living wage for a family of three would be somewhere around $15 per hour as a national average, and the majority of wage-earners earn less than that. In the last few years, incomes have shot up extravagantly for those in the top 1 percent of the income distribution and been stagnant for everyone else. At the same time, benefits for both blue and white collar workers have undergone severe erosion—health insurance and pensions especially.

Is hard work a ticket out of poverty in the United States?

Ehrenreich: That's what I was brought up to believe, and it was once true for many more people than today. Since my childhood, we've lost the manufacturing, mining, and lumbering jobs that once allowed a worker (usually male) to support a family on a single wage. Now more and more jobs are in the low-paid, largely unorganized, service sector, where you can work full-time, year-round, and not get out of poverty.

Do unions protect against worker abuse?

Ehrenreich: Unions do [many things]—for example, in protecting people from arbitrary firings. But I think they need to do more to guarantee basic civil rights on the job. I find it incredible that in most states it is legal for employers to search employees' purses and backpacks. I also think unions should oppose other gross invasions of privacy like drug-testing and reading employees' personal e-mails. What we need is nothing less than a civil rights movement for American workers!

If a worker is not earning a living wage, what should he or she do about it?

Ehrenreich: The first option would be to seek union representation. If no union appears to be interested, there's the option of forming an independent workers' association that can bargain with management. Beyond that, one should find out if there's a living wage movement in the area and get involved. And as with so many other issues, it's essential to investigate political candidates and see which ones, if any, are committed to living wage legislation.

1

The percentage of **DROPOUTS** in 2004 who had ever been **RETAINED A GRADE.**

SOURCE: NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

reported that some retirees were
it was cheaper. Curiosity got the best of me and I tried some....While our
comfortable with the prospect, passing the cat food is
plan I would recommend."

—JOHN O'SULLIVAN, SECRETARY-TREASURER OF THE TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION, IN *TEXAS TEACHER*, JANUARY 2007

PHOTO: SIGRID ESTRADA

The tom joyner Foundation

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Jackson State University, MS
Harris-Stowe State University, MO
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Johnson C. Smith University, NC
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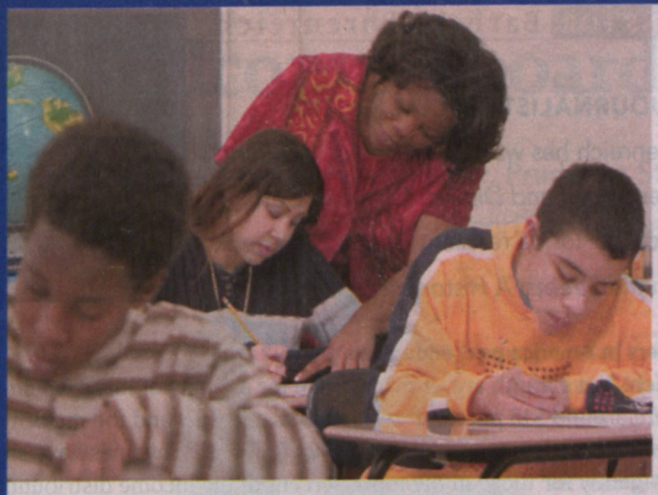

Tom Joyner Foundation & The National Education Association:

Moving Teachers Toward Full Licensure!

The Foundation and the National Education Association believe that pre-K through 12 curriculum should be taught by licensed teachers. We recognize that in certain urban, suburban, and rural communities not every teacher is licensed. In an effort to help teachers become fully licensed, the Foundation and NEA agreed to join forces to assist teachers who desire to gain full licensure. The unprecedented program is designed to increase the number of fully-certified minority teachers around the country to strengthen America's teaching force.

During the 2005-2006 school year, the Foundation provided financial assistance and NEA provided technical assistance and expertise to nearly 300 teachers in seven states supporting their participation in coursework and workshops. The program also paid for materials and individual tutoring to help teachers prepare for state licensure examinations.

Today, the partnership is looking to increase the number of participating Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and expand the program to help more teachers obtain full licensure.

Stay tuned for updated information via the *NEA Today* and the NEA website www.nea.org.

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To receive a grant, your idea doesn't have to be earthshaking, but it should rock your students' world.

Stephen Birmingham, Jim Christopher and Grace Konopacki, teachers in Wheeling, Illinois, had a great idea to help students learn through music. The NEA Foundation gave them funding to make it happen. Your idea could be grant worthy, too. Visit us online to learn more. Applications are now being accepted for the June 1st deadline.

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Don't Be Left Behind

As reauthorization approaches, NEA leaders focus on essential changes.

We don't know how many innings there will be in the contest over reauthorizing the No Child Left Behind law (NCLB), but this high-stakes game has definitely started.

NCLB, the current incarnation of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, expires in September and leaders of the House and Senate education committees say they want to move quickly on reauthorization. Congress could put off decisions much longer than that, but NEA leaders are going on the assumption that the next few weeks may be decisive.

NEA President Reg Weaver led off the reauthorization push with a strong presentation to a joint hearing organized by the U.S. House and Senate education committees. He told lawmakers that NEA members are the first to agree that public schools face challenges—and he listed some of the biggest, from achievement gaps to high dropout rates. These problems, he said, "contradict everything this nation stands for, and they impede our future success."

NEA President **Reg Weaver** speaks for educators at a congressional joint hearing on ESEA/NCLB reauthorization.

Weaver then laid out some of the key, research-tested strategies that NEA is promoting to fix these problems, including small classes, mentoring for new teachers, and better professional development. He called for higher salaries, at least $40,000 for beginning teachers and a living wage for support professionals, which could encourage more people to go into education and make them more likely to stay in the classroom. He put special emphasis on ways to attract and keep quality teachers at hard-to-staff schools, including financial incentives. (His testimony and accompanying materials submitted to the joint hearing can be found at www.nea.org/ref?3633). Shortly afterward, Weaver also addressed the National Lieutenant Governors Association on NCLB.

As lawmakers were gearing up for reauthorization, the NEA Executive Committee laid out its game plan in March, deciding on a short list of top-priority changes that would transform NCLB from a law that hurts education more than it helps, into one that supports educators in closing achievement gaps.

The number one priority on the list calls for schools to be evaluated with multiple measures of achievement, not just one-size-fits-all standardized tests in reading and math. The other measures could be district-level or school assessments, performance assessments, and non-test measures such as attendance, percent of students taking high-level courses, and graduation rates.

Number two on the list is the use of "growth models" in accountability—measuring how much students learn at school, so that schools get credit for helping low-achieving students who make good progress, even if those students have not completely caught up yet.

Also on the list: data should be used to help educators do their work better, not to punish them for low scores.

At the same time, the Executive Committee agreed on a list of "non-starters"—provisions that would lead NEA to oppose reauthorization of the law. That list includes vouchers, undermining collective bargaining, and adding new federal testing mandates. (Read the complete NEA Executive Committee priority list for changing NCLB and the list of "non-starters" at www.nea.org/ref?3636.)

NEA activists throughout the organization are working to make decision-makers in Congress aware of the real-life, classroom impact of NCLB's test-and-punish strategy and telling them what we need from the federal government. For instance, Pamela Burtnett, president of the Lake County Education Association in Florida and a National Board Certified Teacher with more than 25 years of experience teaching language arts, told a Senate panel that the reauthorized law should provide support for a broad array of professional development programs for new and experienced teachers. "I know from my decades of experience that the one thing we do not need are additional federal mandates and hoops for teachers to jump through," she concluded. "Teachers are motivated by their desire to help their students learn." (Read her full testimony at www.nea.org/ref?3634).

But Burtnett isn't alone. NEA members across the country are speaking in public, lobbying quietly, writing to newspapers, making phone calls, and sending e-mails and letters.

And there's room for more! Join the team at www.nea.org/ref?3631 to send your NCLB message to your member of Congress.

—ALAIN JEHLEN

PHOTO: LESLIE E. KOSSOFF/NEA

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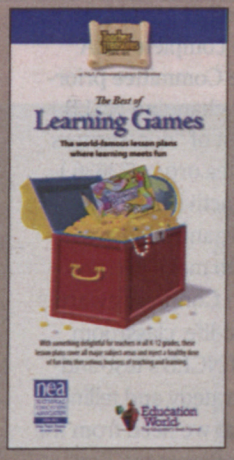

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Great Public Schools for Every Child

Under the Lights, ESPs Shine

A local TV program goes into schools and showcases the hard work of support professionals.

Bonnie Chalfant was accustomed to children running up to her at the grocery store and asking, "Is your bus parked outside?" Chalfant has been a school bus driver for New Jersey's Gloucester Township Public School System for more than 25 years. She's heard the comments more than once.

But it wasn't until she started appearing on the PBS show, *Classroom Close-up NJ*, that she became famous outside her school district and with parents as well as students and administrators.

"I'll be at the drug store and kids and their parents will come up to me and say, 'You're the bus driver that was on TV,'" says Chalfant, president of Gloucester Township Support Professionals.

Bus driver **Bonnie Chalfant** regularly appears on a PBS program that examines life inside New Jersey schools.

For 13 years, Chalfant and other education support professionals (ESPs) have been appearing on a half-hour program co-produced by the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) and NJN Public Television, the local PBS affiliate. The broadcast, which has won seven Emmys, airs twice a week.

Classroom Close-up NJ has featured people and activities at more than 900 schools. The show is known for its in-depth exploration of education issues, local school culture, and events.

"A lot of people who make decisions about public schools have not been in a public school as adults," says Wanda Swanson, the program's executive producer and NJEA member. "They go to a school concert or football game. Our show brings the classroom into the home."

The show is hosted by NJEA Vice President Barbara Keshishian. While it examines all school activities, Swanson says she enjoys working with support professionals because they "do not toot their own horn enough."

"[ESPs] need to say, 'I'm making a difference,'" she says. "They are dedicated workers. They have a lot of pride, and I want to articulate that in the show."

Chalfant and other ESPs recently joined police officers and city emergency workers for a show about how schools can work better with Homeland Security personnel. She was also featured on a program about bus safety that stressed the hazards related to drivers who pass school buses when the yellow lights are flashing.

"Society believes NEA and NJEA are teacher organizations," says Chalfant, a former NEA board member. "*Classroom Close-up* shows ESPs working hard for the school and students. It brings awareness to the community."

And sometimes the show brings help. Michael Hunter, a security guard at Battin Alternative High School in Elizabeth, is the director of a student summer basketball league. After he was profiled on the show, four ESPs and a teacher offered to help coach one of the league's 12 teams. "It generated a lot of interest," he says. "We were able to expand to having a winter league."

Hunter assumed management of the league after the Elizabeth City Parks and Recreation Service discontinued its sponsorship of the program. Hunter kept the league's 300 players in uniforms and on the court by fundraising and recruiting volunteer coaches. He takes copies of the TV program to fundraising and community presentations.

Linda Dunn, a secretary at Seaview Elementary School in Linwood, also had a chance to introduce her literary work with students to the community. So did Sarah Zlogar, whose "Pay it Forward" project for eighth-graders at Millstone Township Middle School in Clarksburg had children write and illustrate books that are donated to children in Liberia.

Classroom Close-up airs 104 times a year. The cost to produce and air the program is about $500,000 a year, or about $5,000 a show. Swanson says three goals are key to making such programs work:

PROMOTE GOOD THINGS happening in schools. "So go into the schools and cover educational issues. This is not a 'talking heads' show," Swanson says. "You actually see school employees doing great things."

PARTNER WITH A television station (local cable company or PBS affiliate). "Let the station seek other sponsors. They have staff to fundraise and promote your program."

CONTROL CONTENT. "Maintain editorial approval of the show's content."

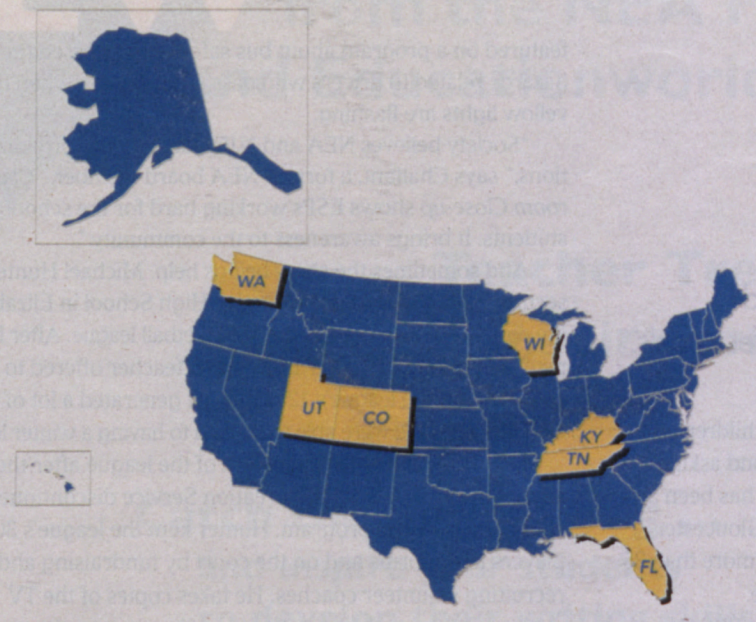
"*Classroom Close-up* is one of the best things about NJEA," Chalfant says.

—JOHN ROSALES

More ESP stories in this issue:

> New Jersey ESP membership reaches 50,000! – *Page 16*
> No more "leftovers" for Wisconsin ESPs – *Page 22*
> An ESP's take on the future of tech in schools – *Page 25*

PHOTO: COURTESY OF NJEA



Timing Is Everything

WISCONSIN Traditionally, the School District of Grafton settled contracts with the **Grafton Paraprofessional and Aides Association (GPAA)** right after negotiating with teachers. This made education support professionals (ESPs) feel as if they were getting "the leftovers, money-wise," according to one bargaining team member. So, the team decided to delay the start of negotiations until after the current ESP contract had almost expired and well after the teachers had settled their contract. The tactic worked. The parties agreed to a three-year contract that brings a $0.75 per hour increase the first year, followed by $0.85 and $1 increases.

"By going to a three-year contract, we were able to spread things out," says Pam Nuñez, head negotiator. "Now, we won't be negotiating the same year as teachers." Though reaching a full living wage for all Grafton ESPs remains to be achieved, "the numbers they were throwing at us were bigger than they ever had been before," says Kim Provencher, associate director of **North Shore United Educators,** the bargaining team GPAA is affiliated with.

Dark STAR

FLORIDA **The Florida Education Association (FEA)** filed a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of a provision in the state budget that created a teacher bonus program based primarily on student learning gains on standardized tests. FEA opposes the plan, called Special Teachers Are Rewarded (STAR), because it was enacted with conditions in the state's budget and creates changes to existing performance pay laws. It also arbitrarily caps the number of instructional personnel who are eligible for performance pay to 25 percent and calls for changes in how they are evaluated, excluding collective bargaining. The program also threatens school collegiality by pitting teachers against each other for bonus money in a state where teacher pay runs $6,000 below the national average, say FEA officials.

Mending Fences

COLORADO After a long bargaining session last fall, the **Pueblo Education Association (PEA)** and school board agreed to work with a fact-finder (a neutral third party chosen by both sides). After board members rejected the advised settlement, both parties returned to the bargaining table with help from a federal mediator and settled on a 2.45 percent increase this year and 2.2 percent in 2007–08. To mend relations and help facilitate fUture negotiations, all agreed that PEA President Carole Partin will join the district's strategic planning committee, and a PEA member will serve on the budget oversight committee. "The opportunity for our Association to participate in strategic planning and decision-making is a huge step," Partin says.

Playing the Percentages

TENNESSEE The **Tennessee Education Association (TEA)** organized its 60-80-90 Campaign to get the state legislature to provide retiring teachers with at least a 60 percent benefit (currently at 48 percent), cover at least 80 percent of active teachers' insurance premiums (the state pays 45 percent for individuals), and guarantee teacher salaries to be at least 90 percent of the national average ($49,109 for the 50 states and Washington, D.C.). The campaign started with eight regional meetings attended by local Association leaders, bargaining chairs, negotiators, and even school board members and superintendents. "We asked them to arrive with creative campaign ideas that involve members," says Earl Wiman, TEA president. The campaign includes cyber-lobbying by members, and enlisting the support of parents, legislators, and business and community leaders.

Pension Battles

KENTUCKY and **UTAH** **The National Public Pension Coalition,** of which NEA President Reg Weaver is chair and secretary, is providing assistance to the **Kentucky Education Association** and other state labor unions during their battle with legislators who are debating a new pension benefit structure for new employees. At press time, the governor had threatened to call a special session to resolve the issue. Meanwhile, the **Utah Education Association** blocked proposed legislation to establish a defined-contribution benefit plan for new employees.

New Unit, New Laws

WASHINGTON Members of the nine-month-old **Education Service Employees of College Place** have recruited 40 out of the 45 eligible paraprofessionals, custodians, food service, and secretarial staff. "Even though we have to negotiate an entire contract, the three main areas of concern are employee labor laws, employee labor laws, and employee labor laws, with a dash of increased wages, please," says paraprofessional and local President Cyndi Mehling.

IMAGE CONSTRUCTION: GROFF CREATIVE INC.

Health Matters

School nurses tackle new challenges to keep kids ready to learn.

National Association of School Nurses (NASN) President Susan Will is an NEA member who works at AGAPE, a St. Paul, Minnesota, alternative school option for students who are pregnant or parenting. She spoke with NEA Today*'s Alain Jehlen about the challenges of nursing in today's schools.*

What do you do for most of your day?

WILL: Our young students have all the issues any high school student would have, "How does my hair look?" in addition to, "How can I possibly be successful and take care of this baby?" They have big challenges. I have an excellent social worker and counselor on-site. Sometimes it takes all three of us to help a student hang on, stay in school, and successfully parent.

Pregnant students run a high rate of complications, in part because some of them aren't getting good prenatal care. So I monitor blood pressure, work with them on diet, and help them understand pregnancy and labor.

After that, we have child care on-site for the babies. If a mom or a member of the child care staff has a concern about a baby, I'll check it—rashes, spitting up, maybe a fever.

Most of your students probably would not have been in school in the past. How else has the job of the school nurse changed?

WILL: We see more students with chronic health problems than we used to, and we don't know why. Asthma's increased, [along with] diabetes, food allergies.

Also, medical technology allows kids to be in school who never used to be. Kids go for cancer chemotherapy and return to school. I've taken care of students with heart transplants. Laws have changed, too. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires all kids to be in school, and the school to support their learning. That's good—everybody can learn something.

The number of children without health insurance is growing. Do you see the effects of that?

WILL: I am always dealing with kids who don't have health insurance. Most states have insurance plans for kids, so the first thing is to try to get the kid into the system. But that child may have to wait four months before it kicks in. And right now, they can't hear because of a middle ear infection, so they can't learn.

School nurses have an amazing amount of knowledge about community resources and can scramble to get kids treated in the short term. But I've had kids show up on Monday morning with broken fingers because a friend's bike rolled over their hand and cracked their bones, and they didn't have insurance so they didn't go to the doctor.

NASN supports reauthorization and extension of the children's health insurance plans. It is appalling that a country of our wealth cannot take adequate care of our children's health.

With these problems, how should an educator who is not a medical professional work with the school nurse?

WILL: Communicate, communicate, communicate. Let the nurse know what you're seeing in the classroom. School nurses are part of the team that serves students, professionally prepared just as teachers are, which is why they should be included in the teachers' union contract and paid professional salaries.

Do teachers and nurses usually communicate well?

WILL: On the whole, yes. But sometimes there's not enough time, when the nurse is only there one or two days a week. Every school should have a school nurse every day. NEA passed a resolution last summer for a [ratio of at least one] school nurse to every 750 students. Teachers are more effective in teaching kids when we've been able to manage the health problems.

An NASN survey showed a huge range in students per nurse—300 in Vermont, 5,500 in Utah. What's the effect on kids?

WILL: School nurses can participate in IEP [Individualized Education Program] teams when they're there frequently enough. They can get immunizations done and support teachers in health education. And they'll have better case management for students with health problems.

There was a really tragic case in Utah where a child had an asthma attack at school, took her inhaler, it didn't work, and she took it again, eight or 10 times. She overdosed, had seizures, and was hospitalized for an extended period of time.

That student's parent started a one-woman effort to increase the number of school nurses, and the Utah legislature just authorized funds for more school nurses.

There have been several recent stories about school nurses who saved lives. We don't do that every day. But the things we do make a student just a little healthier and a little better able to learn. That's the day-in, day-out task of the school nurse.

PHOTO: JANET HOSTETTER

WHAT'S NEXT

As NEA celebrates its 150th anniversary, we asked educators and experts what they see in the years ahead.

As we make our way through the first decade of the 21st century, it may seem that our schools still all too often "model 1950s architecture, use 1990s technology, and deliver 1960s curriculum." So admits educator and architect Jeffery A. Lackney, but behind the bricks and mortar that make up our public schools, a ground swell is rising.

Technology promises to transform our classrooms. A global economy and a changing society force us to revisit long-held assumptions of who our students are—and who they might become. And while the current test-heavy regime weighs heavily on the minds of many, there's hope that this, like so many other challenges that have faced educators over the past century and a half of constant change, will also pass.

On the pages that follow, we asked NEA members and leaders from many walks of life what they think the future holds for public education—a future they believe is bright. Perhaps Kentucky math teacher Kat Crawford puts it best: "While students are prepared for life," she says, "we will also place value on what gives life meaning—values, arts, service to others."

PHOTO: DANNY PECK

Our Schools

Educators will regain the ability to teach what's important.

Chris Gardner

BUSINESSMAN, AUTHOR, AND PHILANTHROPIST Talking about schools of the future gives me the opportunity to dream big for educators. Teachers would be compensated in accordance with their stated value. I say "stated," because people always give lip service to the importance of education—"my favorite teacher this and my favorite teacher that." If educators are so important, compensate them for the incredibly hard job they do every day.

There would never be a cry of "We don't have." The resources educators need would always be available. Not wasted, but used wisely. The current crop of presidential candidates would actually stand by their promises and make public schools a *genuine*—not "conveniently stated while I'm trying to get your vote"—priority.

Education would have real value—and it couldn't happen for me 10, 20, 30 years in the future. If it happened tomorrow, it would be a dream come true for the world.

Janet Napolitano

ARIZONA GOVERNOR Our knowledge-based global economy is changing at a rapid pace, and the nations that produce the best innovators will lead it. In the United States, we are quickly finding that we have some fierce competition. To meet the challenge, we must ensure today's education system meets the needs of tomorrow's economy.

Nothing is more important to the future of public education than raising student achievement. Next to committed parents, the most important element in improving achievement is a qualified, experienced teacher in every classroom. In Arizona, we've made teachers a top priority, focusing on raising teacher pay and enhancing professional development. We are also working hand-in-hand with teachers to prepare our students for the 21st century workforce, focusing on skills needed to solve problems, experiment, and increase their awareness about the world around them.

Together, we're insisting on and striving toward the highest possible standards for our children, from the first day of preschool to the last day of college.

PHOTO RIGHT: MELISSA KING

Technology

Distance learning, individual computers, and the global classroom are all on their way.

George Lucas & Milton Chen

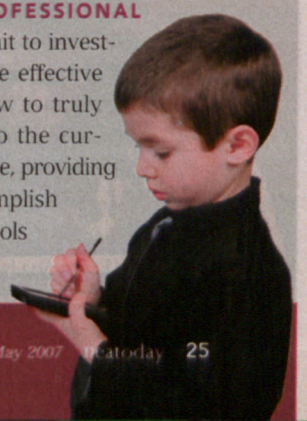
FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN; EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GEORGE LUCAS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION "The Future Ain't What It Used To Be." With apologies to educators who justifiably prize correct grammar, this quote from Yogi Berra captures how the future keeps changing. We can all clearly see how technology keeps changing the future—every few years, it seems—and the future for which our schools need to prepare. Technology has transformed every field of endeavor into a global field, where colleagues collaborate across borders using the Internet. Great benefits would come to our students and, indeed, the world's students, if they could communicate with their peers in other nations.

Simply put, school life should become more like real life, with school work organized around projects rather than textbooks, and students working in teams rather than alone. Schools should break down the two enemies of learning: isolation and abstraction. We should work to ensure schools derive the same benefits that technology has brought to the rest of society—health care, manufacturing, agriculture, architecture, the military, publishing, and entertainment.

Eventually, and hopefully sooner rather than later, every student and teacher should have a mobile computer with wireless Internet access to enable them to communicate and access curricula 24/7. All this, from creating new educational simulations to providing hardware and software, will require a much higher level of investment in our schools than we have seen. As a nation, we can afford it, especially if we view these expenditures not as a cost, but as an investment in the future of our democracy.

Jeri Stodola

EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL Our schools will have to commit to investing in training teachers on the effective use of technology and in how to truly integrate that technology into the curriculum. Without that knowledge, providing access to the "tools" will accomplish little. Many of our nation's schools



Technology

do not have the latest technology that my Chicago suburban district enjoys. Many students do not come from homes where computers are as common as televisions. Looking ahead, I think schools will provide equitable access to the tools that will ensure our students' success in the 21st century.

John Chambers

CHAIRMAN AND CEO, CISCO Education and the Internet are two great equalizers in life. Networking connects us to voice, data, and video, allowing us to communicate across borders, eliminate hurdles, and accomplish tasks previously unattainable.

Imagine a school where teachers and counselors have more time to spend with students because technology tackles administrative tasks, saves money, and enables more individualized education. Imagine hearing the class bell ring and knowing that a system alerts administrators and parents if students are absent; teachers communicate with students and parents on secure Web sites; and video broadcasts televise activities and classes throughout the district—and around the globe. The future of education will see technology creating a new classroom experience, where all students will find learning an engaging, interactive way of life.

Dawn Shephard Pope

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER As a teacher, I feel that lecturing in a classroom within a brick and mortar schoolhouse is coming to an end. Instead, distance education will become a more common tool and students will have a more customized education based on their talents, abilities, and passions in life. However, I often worry that I am still thinking "in the box" and my ideas and vision for the future are not great enough. The world is changing at a very rapid pace, and I want to ensure that I am doing all that I can to meet the needs of my 21st century learners.

Markos Moulitsas Zúniga

BLOGGER AT "DAILY KOS" AND ACTIVIST My wife worries about the educational future of our 3-year-old and newborn. Are the schools good? Will they be properly stimulated? Will they be prepared for their future?

I may have had those worries in a different era, but today's world is much different. The Internet alone is a dramatic shift. I've got the world at my laptop, and even my toddler has gotten used to instant gratification. He'll sidle over as I'm working and say, "I want to see *parasauralophus*," and two seconds later he's admiring the dinosaur on my screen. No matter the topic, no matter the question, I can fire up the laptop and not just have a correct answer, but I can sit him next to me to look at pictures, diagrams, animations, and whatever else satiates his rabid demand to learn.

To me, the standardized education my child will get at school is foundational—a base upon which we can build using our wealth of access to educational materials. I won't be sending my children to school just to learn a predetermined curriculum, but to learn *how* to learn.

Margaret Spellings

U.S. EDUCATION SECRETARY As we look to the future, we know our country's success depends on equipping all our students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed—something we've never really done before. To reach this goal, we must support teachers with the tools and resources they need to help every child reach his or her potential. We must share best practices, bring research-proven methods into the classroom, and leverage the power of technology to customize instruction.

In the last 50 years, American ingenuity has put a man on the moon, mapped the human genome, and developed life-extending drugs and treatment for AIDS. Having every child on grade level by 2014 is another great goal. With the right support for teachers, I know we can reach it.

Kat Crawford

MATH TEACHER I have to believe that the days of high-stakes accountability testing are coming to an end and a more thoughtful, reasonable approach will take its place. As that shift occurs, I believe we are going to see a focus on what is most important—*learning*. Public education can be a leader that looks to the future. I believe that will happen with a focus on preparing our students to be lifelong learners. At the same time, I believe that while students are prepared for life, we will also place value on what gives life meaning—values, arts, service to others.

Al Gore

There was a time when America's public discourse was consistently much more vivid, focused, and clear. We must repair the systemic decay of the public forum and create new ways to engage in a genuine conversation about our future.

From an address at the We Media Conference.

Deborah Meier

EDUCATION ACTIVIST AND AUTHOR We will see a return to celebrating childhood, enjoying those immensely useful childlike qualities instead of squashing them. Instead of making 3-year-olds do "academic" worksheets, I imagine K–12th grade will look more like the kinder (children's) gardens of yesteryear, with everyone involved in serious activities. Playfulness, after all, is at the core of what strong intellectual work is all about.

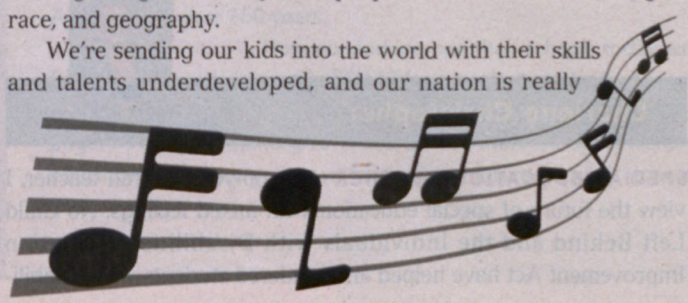
We will also create schools that foster the democratic spirit. At the schools I've been most involved in, the faculty was small enough to meet regularly and sustain open discussions of disagreements about pedagogy, curriculum, discipline, and about what counted as evidence of our success at producing well-educated kids.

Democracy isn't intuitive, or even natural. So I picture schools where adults and kids examine it, practice it, weigh its trade-offs—schools that take democracy seriously, rather than as an afterthought for Civics 101.

Wynton Marsalis

MUSICIAN AND MUSIC ADVOCATE As Americans, it's more important than ever that we have a sense of our identity. We need a generation of diplomats who understand and take pride in our culture and can share it with others. Jazz tells us more about who we are, where we've been, and where we could be going, than any of our indigenous art forms. It is a music of communication that, from the beginning, has transported people across the divides of age, race, and geography.

We're sending our kids into the world with their skills and talents underdeveloped, and our nation is really much poorer for it. We've got a tough challenge ahead of us. But I know that working together, we can make a difference in our children's lives, and we can replace cultural bankruptcy with a full pocket of good music. Lord knows we need it.



Marsalis' Jazz for Young People Curriculum offers a free Web-based curriculum for high school teachers that places jazz at the center of a discussion of American history, through NEA Jazz in the Schools: www.neajazzintheschools.org.

Jonathan Kozol

EDUCATOR AND AUTHOR In spite of the discouraging effects of high-stakes testing and the cold winds blowing down from Washington, I believe that a rebirth of public education—of the joy that teachers take in it and the benefits it brings to children—is ahead of us.

I'm meeting tens of thousands of the best and brightest students in our universities and colleges who are determined to come in and work with us in public schools, not voucher schools, not boutique schools, not semi-private charter schools run by the business sector. They represent a burst of idealistic energy, a love for children, and a thirst for justice, which will reinforce the passions of those in the classroom now.

The tide of discontent with punitive, test-driven, and fear-driven methods of instruction is rising to the point at which I am convinced that we will see, within the next five years, a militant revival of enlightened opposition to these practices among our rank-and-file teachers. These teachers know they are in a battle for the soul of public education. Many feel intimidated by the sword of threats and sanctions under which they are obliged to teach today. But, sooner or later, these teachers will rise up and make their voices heard.

Gary Orfield & Susan Eaton

THE CIVIL RIGHTS PROJECT, HARVARD UNIVERSITY After years of progress following the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to desegregate public schools, segregation rates in our schools have been rising across the country. Incredibly enough, the Bush Administration is asking the Supreme Court this year to forbid school districts to take voluntary action to foster desegregation.

Why should we care? For one thing, desegregated schooling has clear educational benefits—reduced prejudice, improved cross-racial cooperation, increased life chances for African-American students, and in some cases, higher achievement, especially among younger children. Despite it not being a priority of our elected leaders, teachers can play a vital role in promoting desegregation. If they are lucky enough to teach in diverse classrooms, they can engage students in discussions about race and inequality and speak publicly about the benefits of racial diversity. Teachers must be leaders in the struggle for an integrated society. The future of a healthy multiracial society is at stake.

PHOTO LEFT: FREDERIC CHIROU; ILLUSTRATION BOTTOM: AUTOMATIKA

Architecture

How schools of the future look matters far less than how they'll work.

Jeffery A. Lackney

EDUCATOR AND ARCHITECT One might argue that today's 21st century schools model 1950s architecture, use 1990s technology, and deliver 1960s curriculum. For many well-intentioned reasons, public education has coped with a confusing mix of Agricultural and Industrial Age models, making it difficult to conceive of what a school of the new age might look and feel like.

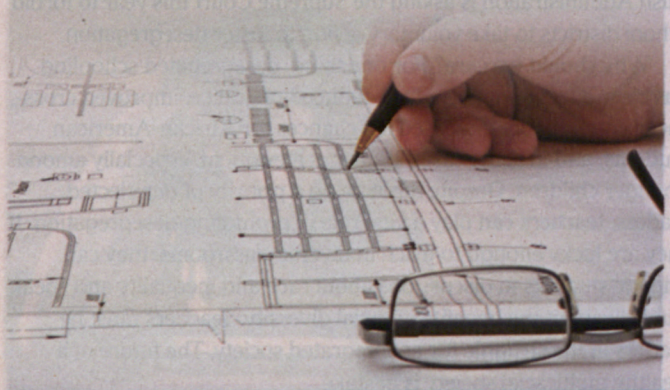
However, there is reason to be optimistic. School designers are rapidly innovating to not only support, but also encourage change in teaching practices to accommodate collaborative, project-based learning and personalized, self-directed learning.

Ron Bogle

PRESIDENT AND CEO, AMERICAN ARCHITECTURAL FOUNDATION The United States is spending over $30 billion each year on the renovation and construction of K–12 schools—more than ever before in our history—just as we are entering an exciting period of change in the way school buildings look and support learning.

The spread of technology, the demand for smaller schools, independent and experiential learning, a more diverse student population, and the growing importance of sustainability are all part of this new mix of forces influencing the design of educational facilities.

To maximize the opportunity to design schools that support student achievement, we must seek greater involvement in the design process by those who actually use our schools.



Our Students

Schools will set the example for an integrated, multicultural society.

Reg Weaver

NEA PRESIDENT Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. once said, "All education springs from some image of the future. If the image of the future held by a society is grossly inaccurate, its education system will betray its youth."

The image of tomorrow's classroom will be more diverse than ever. Multiculturalism is unquestionably merging its way into today's classroom curriculum. For teachers living in major metropolitan areas, multiculturalism is no longer an issue for debate. Multiculturalism is now an everyday fact of life.

As a 30-year classroom veteran, I've seen firsthand the benefits for students who work with others of different ethnic backgrounds. Racial diversity in classrooms helps all students gain skills that are useful in the workplace and in life, such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and understanding different points of view.

Yet as public schools become more diverse, demands will increase to find the most effective ways to help all students succeed academically. This means that teachers will be faced with the challenge of making lesson plans culturally relevant, and all educators will be faced with the challenge of integrating diverse cultures into the curriculum and school programs.

NEA fully welcomes, values, and will adapt to this transformation of America's public school classrooms. In our view, diversity is our greatest strength, and it is a power we must use to face a changing world.

Charlene Christopher

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER As a 30-year veteran teacher, I view the future of special education with mixed feelings. No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act have helped and hindered students with disabili-

PHOTO LEFT: PCHEMYAN GEORGIY; PHOTO ABOVE: DIGITAL VISION

ties at the same time. More scrutiny has been given to decreasing the achievement gap among students with disabilities because of requirements under the laws, which for some students has been a blessing. Yet the stringent rules for accountability for testing special education students and the manner in which the regulations for highly qualified special education teachers have been implemented are causing stressors upon public education that will take years to recover from.

Many of my special education colleagues are frustrated by one-size-fits-all testing requirements that do not meet the needs of their students. General educators in inclusion classes are equally frustrated as they focus more on the data that we need to meet test requirements rather than the enriched curriculum that would be more beneficial to all students.

We must continue to fight for the students we teach, and for future teachers to have a professional career that is rewarding and satisfying.

Pedro Noguera

PROFESSOR AND ACTIVIST In coming years, the achievement gap—the predictable disparities in student achievement that correspond closely with the race and class backgrounds of students—will continue to present one of the greatest challenges to the public education system. Although these disparities in test scores, grades, graduation rates, and college attendance rates (typically explained by racist notions of Black inferiority) have been common for a long time, we are nonetheless seeing a small number of schools where poor children of color are achieving at very high levels. These schools benefit from high levels of parental involvement, high academic standards, and strong leadership from the staff.

Bill Gates

Unless we transform the American high school, we'll limit the economic opportunities for millions of Americans. As a nation, we should start with the goal of every child in the United States graduating from high school.

From testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Of all factors motivating students of color, teacher efficacy ranks the highest. The importance of teachers in reducing racial disparities in achievement, in encouraging a greater number of students to stay in school and become motivated to learn cannot be overstated. Large numbers of students currently have teachers they don't understand, don't identify with, don't trust, and therefore won't learn from.

Finding high-quality teachers who are willing to work in high-poverty, high-minority communities—never easy—should be one of the public education system's highest priorities. The belief that we *can* reduce the historic linkage between race, class, and achievement, with a growing sense of urgency, will help us meet this formidable challenge.

150 Years of Progress

This summer, NEA members will convene in Philadelphia, where in 1857, 43 educators met, answering a national call for a united voice in the cause of public education. A century and a half later, that fledgling Association has grown to play an increasingly vital role in improving the conditions under which educators work and children learn, as well as promoting the human and civil rights of educators and students from all backgrounds. Visit www.nea.org to learn more about:

OUR HISTORY. Visit www.nea.org/ref?3648 to revisit the Association's past 150 years.

OUR PROMISE. How do students see their schools today and in the future? Visit www.nea.org/ref?3649 for a peek at student art.

OUR FUTURE. Agree or disagree with the predictions on these pages? Visit www.nea.org/ref?3652 to read more thoughts from educators and share your own vision of the future of public education.

150
1857 2007
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On the Web

ILLUSTRATION TOP: TODD DAVIDSON

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CAL U

Between 1995 and 2001, the number of Somali students in Minnesota grew from 117 students to 3,569.

Learning a new language is hard enough. For some refugee students, coming to America means stepping foot in a classroom for the first time.

ALMOST FROM SCRATCH

BY MARY ELLEN FLANNERY

Today's poem, being read aloud in this Minneapolis English language class, is almost too fitting. You have to wonder how the textbook author could have known.

Let's get moving!
Come on, let's go.
Pack your bags and dress for snow.
Grab a camera; take a hat.
You'll need a parka.
Don't forget that!

The kids read aloud, trying to match the rhythm of their teacher's tapping pencil, but stumbling over the word parka. They all have winter jackets now, of course. But they never would have needed such a funny, bulky piece of winter wear in their home country. Imagine needing a parka in sub-Saharan Africa!

Nearly all of the teenagers in this Washburn High School class came to Minnesota from Somalia, some directly, many via refugee camps in Kenya. For almost every one, this is their first school. Ever. Their country's violent civil war, now stretching well into its second decade, has killed the school system completely. (Even pre-war, it was ailing.) These kids never learned to read, in any language. They never practiced long division. They never navigated a cafeteria.

Almost every teacher in America has non-English-speaking students these days. It's not a big-city, must-be-South-Florida phenomenon anymore. It's rural. It's suburban. It's everywhere, and it's a tough assignment for teachers, who frequently lack formal English-language learner (ELL) training or classroom support. But imagine this: What if, on top of the expected language barriers, you also had kids, adults almost, who had never seen a pair of scissors?

Educating refugee students comes with special challenges, but the teachers say that many of their strategies can (and should) be applied to all English learners. All students, for example, can benefit from the integration of culturally relevant lessons into regular curriculum and the involvement of family in school. But even those students whose parents haven't been shot or maimed in civil wars may be hard to reach if they're starting almost from scratch. Refugee education is like ELL on steroids.

"If you can just imagine what they've had to learn—and they're already in their late teens," says Washburn language teacher Anna Rutterman. "We need to teach all of the concepts, all of the learning skills. How do you pay attention in class? What do you pay attention to? Their critical thinking skills are very underdeveloped."

The complications of war can't be ignored. "Probably a few have seen their parent killed or their sibling raped. And, I think, at

PHOTO: JANET HOSTETTER

a certain point, it will come back to haunt them," says Ibrahim Ayeh, a Washburn math teacher and program coordinator for Somali students in Minneapolis. However, not as many as you might expect show violent tendencies or other stress-related syndromes in the classroom, he says.

And that's a good thing, because there aren't many school resources for those kinds of problems. The lasting effects of war are also nothing that Somali parents would want to admit to, especially for their daughters, who they still hope will marry well, Ayeh says. And, speaking of those parents, they present another challenge. Even in its best days, the Somali school system didn't serve many children. Nomadic parents usually couldn't afford to send more than one kid into the city for education, so many generations remained illiterate. And it's not their way to be involved in school anyway.

"In Somalia, the parents can't have any input. The government does everything," Ayeh says. "So they think it's the same here, and they don't know they can advocate for students."

But there is one advantage these students do have: They're here now, with Ayeh, in the city of Minneapolis. A former teacher and education official in Somalia's capital city of Mogadishu, Ayeh understands where these kids have been. Better yet, he's got plans for where they're going.

He will be their advocate.

THE ISSUES SURROUNDING Somali students, while more complex than some other refugee populations, aren't unprecedented in Minneapolis. The city has a long tradition of hosting populations fleeing their homeland, including Hmong refugees in the late 1970s and, more recently, Bosnian refugees. Locals say it's the area's Lutheran tradition that inspires a spirit of generosity toward windblown newcomers, plus quite a few faith-based resettlement programs that provide housing and other assistance.

Between 1995 and 2001, the percentage of Somali students in Minnesota grew by a whopping 2,889 percent, according to the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning. (That is, from 117 students to 3,569.) They're still greatly out-numbered by traditional ELLs, like Spanish-speakers, who numbered 12,898 in 2001 after growing by 93 percent during the previous six years. Similar trends can be found across the United States: the number of English-language learners has grown overall from 2 million in 1994 to 3.8 million in 2004, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

In Minneapolis, more than 90 different languages are spoken by students in the public schools, and the system has responded with a variety of strategies, including bilingual education and dual-language programs. At the elementary level, there are even native language literacy programs, so that students can first learn to read and write in their native language, and then transfer those new skills to English. That's the best approach for his refugees, Ayeh believes—especially as it assists immigrant communities in maintaining language cohesiveness.

Reaching English-Language Learners

While teaching strategies for refugee students are similar to those for all English-language learners, particular attention must be paid to helping them become acclimated to the school setting itself. "We need to teach all of the concepts, all of the learning skills," explains Washburn language teacher Anna Rutterman. "How do you pay attention in class? What do you pay attention to?"

KNOW WHO THEY ARE. Understanding students' backgrounds, their previous schooling experience, and their culture is critical, particularly for refugee students for whom the classroom setting may be as unfamiliar as their new country.

ENVIRONMENT MATTERS. Consider labeling everything in your classroom. Assign classroom duties to ELLs to make them feel part of the class, and provide opportunities for them to speak without forcing them to do so. Also, avoid embarrassing students by making verbal corrections in front of the class.

USE VISUAL AIDS. Along with illustrations, charts, and graphs, this includes facial expressions, gestures, and body language when speaking.

SIMPLIFY. When speaking, use one concept per sentence, and keep the sentence structure direct and active. Consider writing summaries of lessons and lectures in simple English.

TEACH LANGUAGE AND CONTENT TOGETHER. Emphasize word meanings and model pronunciation.

TAKE AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH. Doing so helps ELLs make connections and reinforces new vocabulary.

GO FOR DEPTH, NOT BREADTH. Spend more time on learning subjects in greater detail. Allow ample time for students to process new information.

TEACH STUDY AND CLASSROOM SKILLS. Critical for refugee students with limited schooling, this includes explaining how to read and glean information from textbooks.

USE HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES to demonstrate concepts. This is particularly helpful for students unaccustomed to classroom learning.

MODIFY ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTS. Provide multiple ways for ELLs to demonstrate knowledge, including drawings, graphic organizers, story maps, and paraphrasing.

MAKE CONNECTIONS between content and students' prior experiences. One approach that's worked well with ELLs is culturally responsive teaching, which integrates students' backgrounds throughout the curriculum (for more, see www.nea.org/ref?3628.)

USE COOPERATIVE LEARNING. Studies have shown ELLs work more effectively in pairs or small groups, even if they're paired with native speakers. Peer tutoring also works well.

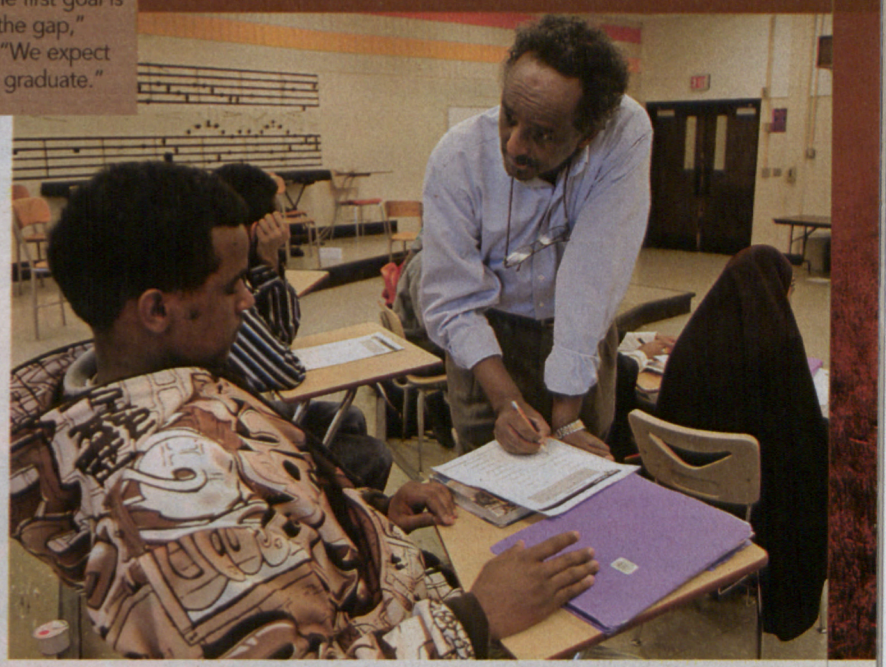
SOURCES: SUNY-STONY BROOK, OHIO VALLEY EDUCATIONAL COOPERATIVE, AND GLENCOE.

When Somali students first arrive in Minneapolis, they're steered toward Ayeh's program at Washburn, which is a center for Somali students. (Other schools have centers for other languages, like Spanish or Hmong.) He assesses them, usually finding a canyon-sized gap between their age and abilities.

"The first goal is to fill the gap. They're in high school and they're functioning at the elementary level, maybe middle," Ayeh says. Nonetheless, he adds, "We expect them to graduate."

And, for the most part, they do.

Walking around his math class, which meets in an old band rehearsal room in this aging red-brick, three-story school, Ayeh points discreetly to a teenager in a sage-green headscarf and matching skirt. "Two years ago, Samira came here, working at the lowest level," he says. "Can you imagine: She's passed the Basic Skills Test!"



Ibrahim Ayeh's Somali students start high school functioning at lower levels. "The first goal is to fill the gap," he says. "We expect them to graduate."

WASHBURN'S NEWCOMERS attend English and math classes with Rutterman and Ayeh, in classrooms of almost all Somali students. In general, Ayeh isn't rushing to mainstream them with fluent English speakers. It can take two years (sometimes less, sometimes more) for them to feel confident, in English and in their own abilities to do well—and he believes self-confidence is a huge part of success.

"Dumping them into the mainstream isn't going to work. You can't expect them to sit there and just learn," he stresses. "We have students who started out in other states, without support, and they've lost their confidence."

In the beginning, he recommends small-group learning. In a resource room, where somebody used to stash musical scores, Ayeh's aide works on long division and double-digit multiplication with two newcomers. Meanwhile, Ayeh's larger group has moved on to algebra, solving for *x* in complex equations.

Try this, he says: 3/2(*x*) x 8/19. Two girls in the front row bow their covered heads, scribble furiously, and then shout out the first step to solving the equation. Very good, says Ayeh. Yes! They tap their flip-flops (which, like all fashion-conscious teens, they're wearing in the middle of winter) on the tiled floor in quick applause, and move assuredly on to the next step.

Whenever possible, he tries to personalize their lessons with cultural references. "When I say 'unlike terms cannot be added,' they ask, 'what's an unlike term?'" he says. "Because we are nomadic people, and they might have had a herd of sheep and a herd of goats at home, I ask, 'Can you count them as one herd?'" (No.)

Ayeh has a big advantage—he can speak their language. But Carla Cruzan, their geography teacher, most definitely does not. And, like many teachers, she doesn't have any specific ELL training either.

She relies on some common-sense strategies instead: modifying textbook lessons to remove difficult vocabulary and making lessons more visual with additional maps and pictures. She even sliced her classroom in half with red tape to illustrate the Earth's equator. She makes a lot of puzzles, she notes, crossword puzzles for spelling and vocabulary, and map puzzles for geography concepts.

Yes, it is more work for her, but it's effective, she says.

Sometimes she's still shocked at what they don't know. "I had a student who didn't know the Earth is round! I couldn't believe it. He asked me where the edge was," she says.

Still, what they lack in knowledge, they make up in motivation.

"They're very eager learners," she says, "and it's nice to see that eagerness to learn." nea

FOR MORE DETAILS AND LINKS to a host of other pedagogical resources for ELLs and refugees, including videos, study guides, and research, visit www.nea.org/ref?3627.

PHOTO: JANET HOSTETTER

SHE'S GONNA NEED A SUB

NEA member Barbara Morgan spent years teaching students to reach for the stars. This summer, she'll orbit them.

BY CYNTHIA KOPKOWSKI

Barbara Morgan's name looms large, nearly a story tall on the IMAX screen behind her at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston. In front of her on this January morning are 150 students and fellow teachers whose eyes widen when she talks about her job.

This summer, that job will entail operating a robotic arm to attach a large piece of equipment to the International Space Station while orbiting Earth with five fellow astronauts. For 14 days aboard the Space Shuttle *Endeavour*, she'll dine on such delicacies as freeze-dried shrimp cocktail and twirling, airborne M&Ms. The view from her bedroom window will be the brilliant blue and white of Earth against the inky black of space.

To say it's shaping up to be an interesting summer for Barbara Morgan is an understatement. The former Idaho elementary school teacher, who got her start at an American Indian reservation school in the 1970s, is poised to become the second teacher launched into space since the first headed there in 1986.

1986. It is a year that haunts in the NASA halls and laboratories and in the minds of many educators, who remember watching as NEA member Christa McAuliffe's flight to become the first teacher in space ended in a flash of light and arc of smoke across a cloudless sky. As a charter member of NASA's Teacher in Space Program, Morgan had been McAuliffe's backup for the doomed *Challenger* mission.

Morgan had answered a NASA ad soliciting applicants in a professional journal shortly after President Reagan announced plans to send a teacher to space. Several months later, she found herself at Johnson Space Center, working alongside the cheery and hard-working colleague from New Hampshire. McAuliffe will be with her still when she lifts off from Cape Canaveral this summer, Morgan says. "Teachers all over the world carry her with them. Christa was and always will be our teacher in space."

After the *Challenger* accident, Morgan returned to the classroom in Idaho, finding comfort in the daily challenge of engaging and guiding students as she had done throughout her career as an elementary reading, remedial math, and science teacher. But she says she never really left NASA in spirit or in practice. While in Idaho, she continued to lecture, consult, and design curriculum for the agency.

In 1998, the call came from Houston asking if she wanted to return to the space flight queue, this time as the first Educator Astronaut. The title was new, as was the job. In a significant twist on her previous role, she would become a fully trained astronaut first and an education advocate second. Morgan didn't hesitate. Even as *Challenger*'s loss remained at the forefront of her mind, "my decision was quick," she says. "I weighed the risks." To back away from the challenge would have

BACKGROUND PHOTO: VASILEV IVAN MIHAYLOVICH; GLASS SPHERE PHOTO: SURAVID; PHOTO COLLAGE: GROFF CREATIVE, INC.

meant not being part of the effort to "figure out what went wrong and fix it." Barbara Morgan was headed back to space.

Risk, and how to minimize it, was on the day's lesson plan as Morgan and her crewmates sat in a classroom of their own at Johnson Space Center one afternoon in January. Their instructor was teaching them how to read data accumulated by new sensors installed along the front edge of the space shuttle's wings—a step taken following another shuttle disaster, the 2003 *Columbia* explosion. That accident was attributed to foam striking a wing edge undetected by the astronauts until it was too late. As the instructor talks, Morgan is intent, jotting notes and taking in everything that is explained. The stakes are too high not to.

"She is very attentive," says trainer Robert Tomaro, reflecting on how her teaching background shapes Morgan the student. He's one of a cadre of instructors teaching her everything from moving efficiently through the shuttle to how to brush her teeth in a zero-gravity environment. "She has a tendency to pay more attention to what the [instructors are] saying with their body language, to really read them," Tomaro says. When *NEA Today* asked Morgan last year what she was reading for a feature on summer reading, she replied, only half-joking, "flight training manuals." And a few nights before that January class on sensors, fellow astronaut Dafydd Williams said Morgan had e-mailed him about some work they'd done in the week's training. The e-mail had come past midnight. "I expect a lot out of her on the flight," says Scott Kelly, who will helm Morgan's mission. "She's one of the crew."

Being a teacher will never leave her though, says Morgan, a longtime NEA member. Part of her role as an Educator Astronaut is inspiring students to take an interest in math and science and to elevate teaching as a profession. (See "Want To Make Space Pesto?") Even the mission patch she wears on her flight suit attests to her passion for advancing public education—her contribution is a torch representing the flame of knowledge. Morgan asked for it to be added to the patch to honor students and teachers. "It's a huge responsibility, but I hope I will do a good job representing my [teaching] colleagues," she says. "Hopefully this will be a great opportunity to remind everyone what teachers are all about."

Wrapping up her conversation with the students gathered at NASA on that January morning, Morgan is emphatic about the importance of the work she's doing. "It's the best job in the world," she tells them, her face breaking into a wide smile. Only this time, she's not talking about being an astronaut. She's telling them about being a teacher. nea

Send comments on this story to ckopkowski@nea.org.

Want To Make Space Pesto?

Only one NEA member will be aboard the *Endeavour* when it blasts off this summer, but NASA definitely wants you involved in the mission! This fall, the agency will roll out activities for educators eager to offer students a firsthand look at aeronautics work.

"It's all about learning and exploring, and we want them to come with us," Educator-Astronaut Barbara Morgan says. Although her primary role in space is as an astronaut, the former Idaho elementary school teacher is capitalizing on the mission to stress to students the importance of considering a career in space (be it travel or ground support.) "That's what this work is all about," she says. "You see the math, the science, communications—every curriculum area is involved."

THE CENTERPIECE OF NASA's education push this fall is the Engineering Design Challenge. This summer, *Endeavour* will tote 75 pounds of basil seeds (that's 6 million seeds for those keeping track) into orbit. This fall, students can design a plant growing system capable of being delivered to or built on the surface of the moon. NASA will make the basil seeds available to 100,000 educators on a first-come, first-served basis, so students can test their designs. They'll offer grade-appropriate lesson guides, assessment tools, background materials, and tips for your budding researchers and engineers.

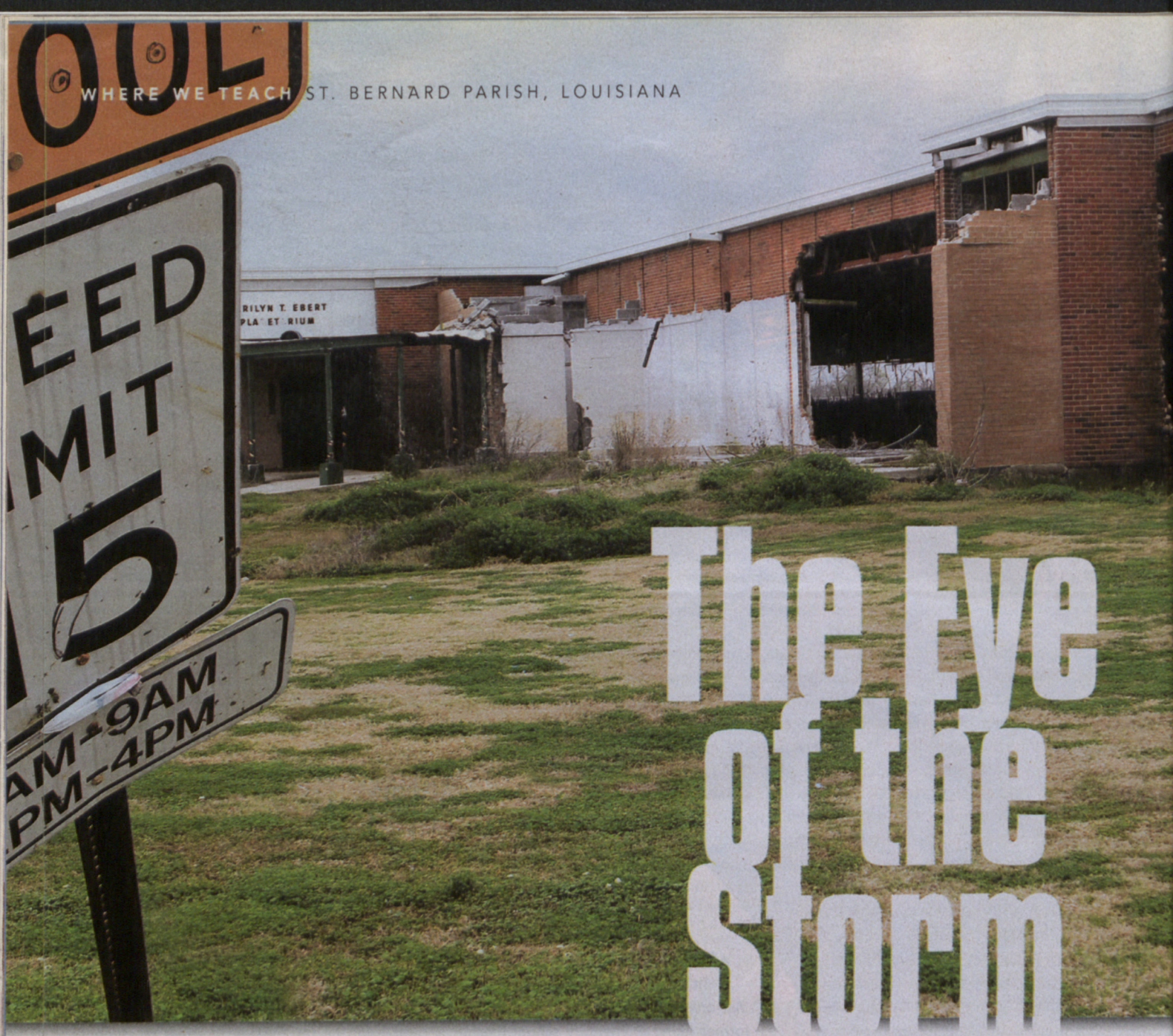
LATER THIS FALL, NASA will offer a physical challenge in which teachers can get free lesson plans that help students learn to train like an astronaut.

A "CAREER CORNER" will offer students the chance to learn more about what it takes to become a NASA scientist.

We'll update you at www.nea.org/ref?3629 when those challenges are officially unveiled and let you know how to apply for the seeds.

There are plenty of goodies online already, though. Visit the educators' section of http://education.nasa.gov. It's got space travel news, activities, and multimedia resources, broken down by age range.

PHOTO TOP LEFT: NASA. TOP RIGHT: TIM JOHNSON/AP IMAGES



The Eye of the Storm

BY CYNTHIA KOPKOWSKI

When the waters from Hurricane Katrina receded, they left a new, daunting way of life for Gulf Coast educators. More than 18 months later, the region is far from back to normal.

There are two ways of looking at life in St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana, a year and a half after Hurricane Katrina: like a visitor or like an educator who calls the parish home.

Visitors stare at the near-total destruction, caused by up to 30 feet of toxic water flooding the parish when the levees broke, a government-owned channel surged its banks, and the local refinery's massive oil tank fractured. Smashed, rusting cars and boats rise from the water and weeds of Bayou Bienvenue at awkward angles. Rotting brown trees shorn of leaves poke the sky abruptly. A seemingly endless procession of homes with brick walls missing, windows smashed, and possessions strewn across their yards dot the landscape. On nearly all houses remain the spray-painted markings of the rescuers who floated from house to house searching for survivors and the dead. The visitor might presume that Hurricane Katrina ravaged this land a week ago, not 18 months ago.

The educator takes in the same littered bayou, the same dead trees, the same crippled homes, and sees progress if there is one less rusted car, one dead tree cut down, or one resident slowly carrying away buckets of debris. "You can't look around and say, 'It's destroyed,'" says first-grade teacher Karen Nunez. "You have to say, 'Look, there's a little progress.' That's the only way to save your sanity."

"You can't look around and say, 'It's destroyed,'" says first-grade teacher Karen Nunez.

The story is the same across the Gulf Coast, from nearby New Orleans—where only 56 of the district's 128 schools have reopened, more than half of them as charter schools—to the region as a whole, where more than 100,000 displaced residents are still living in temporary housing. Educators and support professionals in St. Bernard Parish, like those from other ravaged Gulf Coast cities and towns, have had to learn how to cope on their own, while helping their fragile students do the same.

"It is a new world," says special education diagnostician Yvonne Ben. "If you were to ask me before the storm, I would have said we couldn't make it."

When Hurricane Katrina was still an unnamed mass in the Atlantic Ocean in late August 2005, nearly 9,000 students were getting the year under way at the 14 public schools sprinkled across St. Bernard Parish, just east of New Orleans. A year and a half later, only two schools in one of the parish's towns—Chalmette—are up and running, serving less than half of the area's pre-Katrina students.

But between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m., Andrew Jackson Elementary and Chalmette High buzz with noise and activity. Andrew Jackson is now home to 2,000 elementary school students, along with all sixth-graders from the parish's former middle school system. The seventh- and eighth-graders attend Chalmette High, rounding out the number there to 2,000.

Routing a couple thousand elementary school students and tweens through a building constructed as a high school and the adjacent grid of portable classrooms added to handle overflow is a logistical triumph. During lunch periods, up to three grades at once sit in percolating rows, munching on fish sticks and applesauce and chattering loudly. When it's time to leave, they pour into the hallways, where teachers must serve not only as traffic directors, but also as hall monitors, hug-bestowers, and shoetiers. Two new schools are expected to open next year to accommodate the increasing number of students gradually returning to St. Bernard Parish.

Those students have changed in the aftermath of the storm. "The kids see more and hear more in those little bitty FEMA trailers than they need to," says Nunez. "We are trying to adjust to [their] new situations. We're more flexible now than we were two years ago." Some students commute up to two hours each way to get to school, coming from temporary homes as far away as Slidell and Baton Rouge to attend school in their home parish. For most students, home remains a cramped FEMA trailer in which they jockey for space with parents, siblings, and pets. "In the past, I would have never allowed a student to just get up and walk around the classroom," says fifth-grade teacher Donna Schultz. Now she and her colleagues deliberately build physical activity into their lessons. Group work, classroom stations, and peer tutoring that gets children moving are valuable tools of the trade. Jumping jacks are frequently prescribed in a few classrooms.

Teachers know that in some cases, students are hunkering into their trailers' small plastic bathtubs to do homework in as quiet a surrounding as possible. At Chalmette High, history teacher Dennis Bradley confides that, like a number of his peers, he doesn't even give homework anymore, knowing the conditions under which it must be tackled.

"It's a challenge to keep them grounded," says sixth-grade teacher Carole Perkins. "Their whole way of life has changed, and that turmoil comes into the classroom."

At different schools before Hurricane Katrina, ESP **Yvonne Ben** (from left) and teachers **Karen Nunez, Donna Schultz, Carole Ortego,** and **Carole Perkins** now work together at the only elementary school left in St. Bernard Parish.

Fifth-grade teacher Carole Ortego incorporates more art projects, allowing students to express themselves by making booklets about Katrina composed of poetry and pictures. For a recent vocabulary assignment, she had the students illustrate words like "gale." Not one of them had to ask what the word meant; nearly all colored pictures of their own homes being buffeted by winds and rain. Her philosophy: "These are my babies. I have to get them through this."

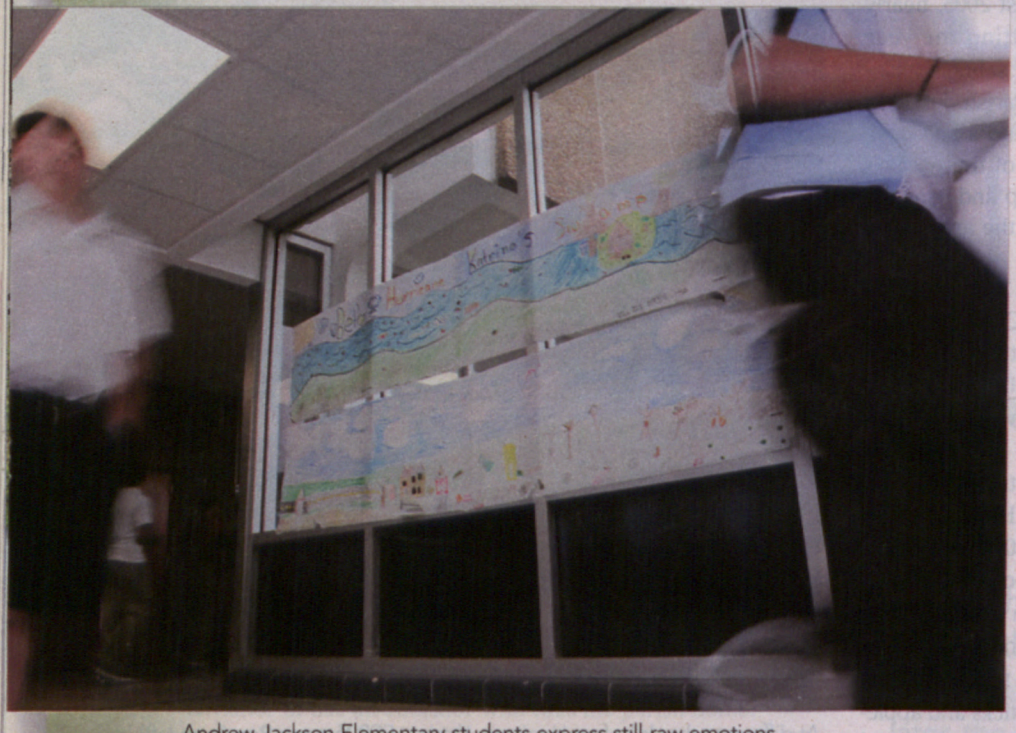
"You have to say, 'Look, there's a little progress.' That's the only way to save your sanity."

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION (LEFT) AND PHOTO RIGHT: JOHN BALLANCE

But the tumult of the past 18 months may weigh the most heavily on the teenagers, who come from four high schools of varying academic success and economic backgrounds. "They don't want to accept the change," says Bradley, adding that at least a small degree of tension is omnipresent. "Some have just shut down, others are resigned."

Discipline is made more difficult because each of the previous schools did things a little bit differently. "You basically have teenagers who rebel to begin with, who are trying to push the envelope a little more," says Bradley while monitoring the hall outside his classroom during a class change. Breaking up a few arguments last year, Bradley found himself asking students, "'Haven't we been through enough together?'"

In addition to seeing their homes destroyed, many students witnessed unspeakable events during the storm, says Jackie Porter, a social worker at Chalmette High. Some saw family members and neighbors drown while they were being lifted into rescue boats. Teachers and education support professionals closely monitor students for signs that emotional burdens are affecting academic performance. While the federal and state governments granted Louisiana schools a one-year reprieve from assessment testing last year, all 10th-graders must now pass language and math tests, and all seniors must pass social studies and science exit exams.



Andrew Jackson Elementary students express still-raw emotions through art. Here, a pastoral view of life on the Mississippi River before Hurricane Katrina gives way to a bleak, post-storm landscape.

"We look for changes, where a student who was at least adequate before is now doing worse," says Porter. Seems simple, right? Not when Chalmette High's student population and staff is an amalgam of the four previous high schools, the destroyed private school system, and transplants from surrounding parishes. Compounding the problem: in less than an hour, Katrina's waters swallowed nearly all paper records—report cards, IEPs, special education evaluations. Staff continue to painstakingly recreate those files based on electronic records and documents sent from the far-flung districts where students scattered after the hurricane. Even contacting parents has been hampered by disconnected phone numbers and cell phones and computers lost in the flood.

"These teachers here?" Nunez says. "We're more like pioneers now."

For St. Bernard's educators, the reminders of Katrina don't end with the 3 p.m. bell. For many, the day still begins and ends in a FEMA trailer with less than 300 square feet of living space. In some cases, that trailer is parked in a lot on the school grounds. And don't think mobile home—think camper. Teachers like Donna Schultz—who lives in a trailer with her husband and autistic son—and Dennis Bradley, who until recently lived in a trailer with his wife, two sons, and the family dogs, refer to the cramped quarters as "can-dominiums." Further frustrating those who have called a trailer home for the past year and a half: of the $17 billion allocated to the Department of Housing and Urban Development to help people rebuild their homes, only $1.7 billion has actually made its way into residents' hands.

In addition to juggling their workload, educators must also find a way to accommodate necessary, mid-day dashes to their damaged houses when a contractor or delivery person is scheduled to arrive. Even with what teachers at both schools call the unwavering support and understanding of their administrators, "it's a bit overwhelming," says Carole Perkins. Donna Schultz confesses that as a result, "we do have our crazy moments."

Lunchtime is more precious than ever, giving teachers 20 minutes to sit, eat a sandwich, and blow off steam. Excitement is infectious when someone's new kitchen cabinets are arriving that day, or if the plumbing got hooked up at a home the previous weekend. They trade tips on which restaurant is supposed to open that week (few have, and almost none in the parish are open past 7 p.m.) and what new stock the Walgreens drugstore has in.

When conversation turns inevitably to the federal, state, and parish government's grindingly slow recovery efforts, bitterness pervades. Although FEMA received $42 billion for recovery, only half was spent as of February, according to news reports. And as much as $1.4 billion of that amount was misspent, according to the Government Accountability Office. In Louisiana, the Army Corps of Engineers received $5.8 billion to repair fractured lev-

"You basically have teenagers who rebel to begin with, who are trying to push the envelope a li

In 15 minutes, Chalmette High teacher **Dennis Bradley's** home and town were destroyed by 30 feet of water. Eighteen months later, his former home is still in ruins. Below, **Donna Schultz** shows the sleeping quarters in the tiny trailer she shares with her family.

ees, yet only $1.3 billion has been spent.

The stress from rebuilding lives and houses "is going to have an effect over time," says Ortego. Chalmette High's Bradley agrees. He knows from talking with his colleagues that some of them will retire sooner than they'd imagined. His own home was destroyed, and as he walks through the shell of it, pointing out where walls and rooms once stood, he says simply, "It was a nice house." He stares at the rotted beams and soggy belongings still littering the floor. "Nothing big or fancy. But nice." From the front yard he points to darkened, damaged homes that line the debris-strewn street, rattling off the list of neighbors who have moved on with no plans of returning to the once-vibrant middle-class neighborhood. The day before Katrina hit, he was at the park around the corner watching his son's soccer game. Now the park is one more empty, weed-choked plot of land in a blighted neighborhood where streetlights flicker on at night only to illuminate empty concrete pads where houses used to be. "We're trying to move on here," says Bradley, "but sometimes we can't."

One week this past winter, a photographer arrived at Carole Ortego's classroom door with pictures of her son and daughter lifted from the muck of her ruined home. When he pulled the fully restored photos from their protective bag, she began sobbing in front of her students. He had "turned back the clock," she says. With her students watching and waiting, Ortego wiped the tears streaking her cheeks and used the moment to help them confront their own losses. "'I said, 'It's OK to have these feelings,'" she recalls, her eyes brimming with tears as she recounts that moment. "Some days you don't know how you and they are here and functioning." nea

Send comments on this story to ckopkowski@nea.org.

tle more....Haven't we been through enough?" asks Bradley, breaking up a student argument.

PHOTOS: JOHN BALLANCE

Acclimation Station

Newcomer centers help Asian Pacific Islander students transition into American public schools.

Shirley Lum teaches English for Second-Language Learners (ESLLs) at McKinley High School in Honolulu, Hawaii. A child of immigrants—her parents are Chinese—Lum is well aware of the struggles newcomers encounter, but her classroom is filled with students facing even higher hurdles than a language barrier.

Currently, more than 17,000 ESLLs attend Hawaii public schools, and Lum's classroom is dominated by students from the Micronesian island groups, the fastest-growing segment of the state's ESLL program. The Compact of Free Association between the United States and the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands allows residents of the two former Trust Territory nations to freely move anywhere within the United States. The islanders frequently move to Hawaii for better job opportunities, health care, and education for their children. Ironically, despite a desire for a better education and the opportunities it brings, the Micronesian culture de-emphasizes formal education, and many Micronesian children drop out before graduating.

The task Lum and other ESLL teachers in Hawaii face is to overcome language difficulties, while also finding a way around a cultural value system where school is optional and learning is informal.

Micronesian culture is based on oral history. Young people learn by listening to the stories of elders, and through songs, dances, and artwork. They're taught to listen without asking questions—to behave otherwise would be disrespectful.

Immigrant students benefit from newcomer centers in Hawaii.

"When they come here at age 14 or 15, the cultural system is ingrained," says Lum. "Some arrive at 16 or 17 and have so much to catch up on they can't meet the 22-credit graduation requirement."

To help them transition, Lum has proposed setting up a newcomer center at McKinley for immigrant students. The Hawaii Department of Education already operates newcomer centers throughout the island state. The centers offer one year of instruction for students with limited English, as well as acculturation training to help familiarize students with the American school setting.

"A newcomer school would be ideal," says Lum. "We're asking for at least a quarter of a million dollars to run this school, but if the funding is released, there are other questions to consider—will we have access to the proper teachers and facilities? We want educated Micronesians to be part of it—do we have them in our reach?"

Diane Murakami teaches at Queen Kaahumanu Elementary School in Honolulu, where a newcomer center was established for the 2006–07 school year. Called the New Student Support Center (NSSC), it was integrated into the existing English-language learners program so that resources could be shared.

"Homeroom teachers referred students they felt would benefit from participation in the NSSC, and students who met a set of criteria, including language barriers, limited age-appropriate education in the major content areas, and a lack of familiarity with the Hawaii public school system, were eligible to participate in the center from Monday to Friday, 8:15 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.," explains Murakami. She says students were provided a specialized curriculum plan that incorporated orientation to school and society with individualized and small group instruction and multicultural education.

At the end of each quarter, the students' progress was evaluated and the NSSC staff collaborated with the regular homeroom teachers to make a decision about whether a student was ready to leave the center.

"We want to offer many opportunities to learn in ways that provide the best chance to succeed," says Murakami.

That's also the hope of Shirley Lum. With or without newcomer centers, however, Lum recommends that ESLL teachers with Micronesian students, or immigrant students from any country, try to understand their culture, be patient, and set high standards.

"We should instill in these students that the American dream is possible. We don't want to treat them differently or set lower expectations—we don't want them to just get by," she says. During her 25-year career, Lum has seen many Micronesian students succeed. "They came with no English but were ready to study hard. Some work for the government now with bilingual skills," she says. "Just like my parents when they came over, each person just needs to see the end of the road."

PHOTO: AP IMAGES

Do students learn better in single-sex classrooms?

YES

Single-sex classrooms can make it easier for teachers to match their instructional style to the behavioral characteristics of the students. Girls seem to favor learning in a quieter setting in which they work together and come to a consensus. Boys tend to favor a setting that is more competitive, physically active, and louder.

Early research shows that girls reap the most benefits from being together for math and science. They feel more comfortable about their abilities without worrying about how they appear to boys, and they have more opportunity to participate in class discussions. Boys, who are typically more confident in math and science, dominate discussions, and teachers tend to call on boys more often.

Recent research shows that boys also benefit from single-sex classes. It is likely that teachers of a class of boys will adopt a teaching approach that encourages boys' tendencies during discussions to be direct and confrontational, loud and excited at times, and to interrupt each other as well as the teacher. Of course, not all girls and boys are going to be comfortable in single-sex classrooms, so it would have to be voluntary enrollment. But offering single-sex classrooms in public schools is the cheapest, most effective, and simplest "innovation" available to improve achievement, particularly in math and science.

ROBERT KIRSCHENBAUM is a school psychologist with the Clover Park School District in Lakewood, Washington.

NO

Perhaps the opposite gender could be a distraction for students in the classroom, but by grouping students by gender, we lose important elements of true education. In a diverse classroom, there are countless questions, different perspectives, and a variety of interests, which all add to the excitement of learning.

Our students have much to contribute to each other, and students of all ages benefit from being engaged in activities and learning in the company of the opposite sex. In the classroom, learning experiences need to resemble real-world life experiences. How can we prepare students for future families, homes, and workplaces without exposing them to members of the opposite sex? How can we expect them to learn to respect and appreciate gender differences as adults if we do not teach them to form healthy relationships and have positive interactions and appropriate dialogues now?

I also believe that female classmates encourage many unmotivated male students. In my middle school classroom, I see my female students try to motivate my male students who seem to be less interested.

As educators, our efforts should not be driven by how we can separate students to minimize distractions but by how we can bring all students together to maximize learning. In my experience, students tend to learn better when teachers learn to teach better—regardless of the gender of the students.

ANDRÉ BOYD teaches at Johnson Middle School in Timmonsville, South Carolina.

OTHER VOICES

Here's what other educators are saying on our message boards. Join the debate by visiting www.nea.org/debate.

WHEN CHILDREN enter the middle school years, they should be put in separate classes. There are so many hormones jumping around that it would be less of a distraction for both parties involved.

TEACHERS ARE always told by the business types to "prepare students for the real world." I have yet to hold a job where I worked with only men. If research supports higher achievement for single-sex classrooms, great. But at what cost? When does short-term success overtake long-term?

IT WASN'T UNTIL I was teaching eighth grade that I realized how badly boys and girls need to be separated. It was a class of low-achieving students who were victims of the myriad social ills that plague a devalued urban community. Boys and girls had gym class separately on different days. When the girls went to gym, the change in the boys was nothing short of miraculous. It was as if both sexes welcomed the relief from the pressure of trying to learn while their primary preoccupation was calculating their behavior to impress the opposite sex....[More experience with] social interaction with the opposite sex as encountered in an adult working situation is not worth sacrificing academic success. Without this success, too few students will become employable in any setting....In a sex-segregated classroom, it is possible to better capture and hold these kids' attention.

TELL US ABOUT IT

Which teacher had the biggest impact on your life? Share your thoughts on our Forums page—www.nea.org/forum—or e-mail your story to clong@nea.org.

ILLUSTRATION: CHRISTIAN LOPEZ

I Knew I Wanted To Be a Teacher When...

As the school year draws to a hectic close and your students develop a serious case of cabin fever, do you need to be reminded why you joined the world's greatest profession? Let your colleagues' educational epiphanies provide a little inspiration.

DID I SAY THAT?

My parents (both teachers) always knew I'd be a teacher, but I was a little slow to figure it out! After a year at the Fashion Institute of Technology and a couple of years at Ohio State to earn a degree in English literature, I was off to law school. Sitting in Contracts class with all the other new students, waiting for the professor to arrive, the conversation turned excitedly to what type of lawyer each wished to be: prosecutor, criminal law, and so on. My turn: "A second-grade teacher." Truly an "A-ha" moment. I withdrew that afternoon. Two years later, I had my first second-grade classroom. I have never regretted my decision.

SHANNON KRIEGMONT
Now teaching first grade and living in Madison, Ohio

BORN TO TEACH

My mom says she knew I was really going to be a teacher when she caught the third-grade me one night talking after the lights were out. She said she peeked in to find my Cabbage Patch doll sitting on my stomach. Ariel the doll was playing the role of the school board person, saying, "No, you can't have more money." And I, playing the role of the teacher, replied, "OK, fine. I'll work with what I have and my class will be happy anyway!" We still don't know where I learned about school boards!

DEBBIE NAVRATIL
English teacher
Campbell, California

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

We—my family—were Bulgarian refugees from the labor camps of WWII whose move to the land of freedom was sponsored by a Wisconsin church. We came through Ellis Island, worked in Wisconsin to repay our benefactors, and landed by train in Kansas City, Missouri. Our goal was to learn English, work hard, and become true American citizens. My older sister had the "job" of interpreting for the family and taking the bus downtown to pay bills. My family "job" was to come home each day from school and "teach" English. (I also read the mail and newspapers and wrote correspondence.) I loved school, our new country, and my job so much that, in third grade, I decided to make it permanent. I was then—and am still—a teacher who loves her job!

ROSIE EASTWOOD
Overland Park, Kansas

POWER OF PRAISE

I knew I wanted to become a teacher the day my high school English teacher, Jack McKinney at Garfield High School in Akron, Ohio, wrote on my essay, "You give me hope." Now I sometimes write his same words on the papers of my English students!

JUDY AUCH
English, speech, gifted education teacher
Williamstown, West Virginia

SINCEREST FORM OF FLATTERY

I was in first grade when I stopped in to tell my principal I wanted to drop out of school. She was so nice as she bent down to talk to me heart-to-heart and asked me if I would give them another chance. My teacher went to the trouble to give me more work to stimulate my curiosity and interest. She was so great about it all that I realized I wanted to be just like her. Three years ago, I retired after 33 successful years of teaching. I missed the kids so much I went back to subbing this year.

VIKKI MOORMANN
Senior high English teacher
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

TOP PHOTO: ELIE BERNAGER;
FLAG PHOTO: KANWARJIT SINGH BOPARAI; HEART IMAGE: OBLONG1

The Best Reward

Last year, I had an English-language learner in my class from an economically disadvantaged background. Nancy worked so hard in every subject. She took pride in her work and always wanted to present her best. She did this all the way up the grades so that by the time I had the privilege of teaching her in fifth grade, she was making consistently high marks. But it didn't come easily for her. She had to put extra effort into it.

All year I was pulling for Nancy. I had this cheerleader inside saying, "Yeah, go Nancy!" I started to say things to her in class like, "So, Nancy, when you run for president, you'll have my vote!" Then I would say, to those listening, "She thinks I'm kidding." We do these things as teachers. Just trying to get kids to dream big. In June we awarded her Student of the Month because of all her hard work and increasing success. At the end of the year, I reminded her, "Remember Nancy, when you run for president, you've got my vote." Well Nancy (who is pretty shy normally) got up her courage, turned to me, and said, "I don't want to be the president. I want to be a teacher." I hate to cry in front of fifth-graders!

PHILIP KRUMP
Fifth-grade math and ELA teacher, Rockland County New York

Tips for Closing the School Year

Recycle School Supplies

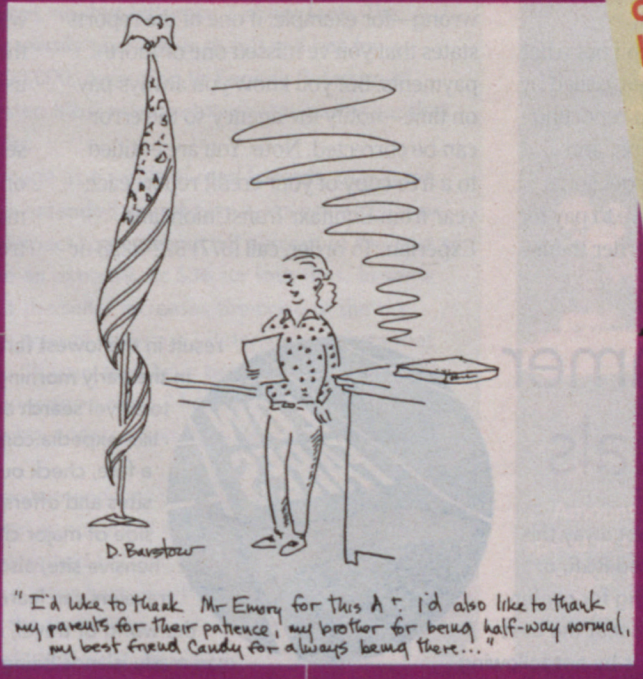
At the end of the year, many students don't want to save their old school supplies—crayons, colored pencils, rulers, erasers, pencils, paper, and other items. In many cases, these items just get thrown out at home, so our school puts boxes that are clearly labeled for each item in each hallway. The last two days of school, the children may contribute to the supply boxes, which fill up quickly. We ask which teachers or staff members (art, resource, computer) need extra supplies and those requests are quickly filled. We choose the best supplies for needy students in our school and donate the surplus supplies to area agencies and preschools.

SONNY BECHLER
Special education teacher
Libertyville, Illinois

Send Graduation Notes

As a first-grade teacher, I was in a great position to see my students succeed as they progressed through school. I kept my class list each year, and as I read or heard about any achievement a child made, I would send a note acknowledging it. At graduation time, I would scan the paper for names of former students and send a graduation card with a personal note telling them how proud I was to see them reach their milestone in education. I have gotten so many replies, telling me how much that meant to my former students.

CAROLLYN MAHIEU
Retired
Davenport, Iowa


D. Barstow
"I'd like to thank Mr Emery for this A+. I'd also like to thank my parents for their patience, my brother for being half-way normal, my best friend Candy for always being there..."

Got a great classroom bulletin board, cool project, or creative lesson?

Send photos and descriptions of your bulletin boards, class projects, and best lesson plans to **sholcomb@nea.org**. Please include your name, your job, and the community and state where you work.

For a weekly e-mail of questions, answers, and practical classroom tips, join Works4Me, one of NEA's most popular and useful services. Just send the message "subscribe Works4Me" (without the quotation marks) to **Lyris@list.nea.org**.

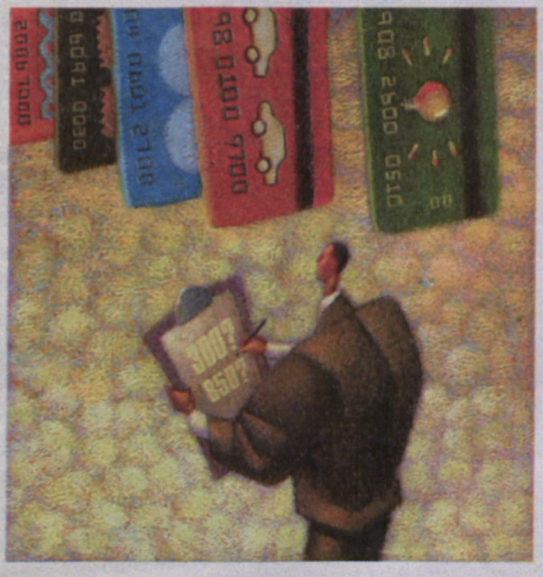
BOTTOM PHOTO: DIGITAL VISION; NOTEPAD: STEPHEN AARON REES; SCHOOL SUPPLIES: THOMAS M. PERKINS; GRADUATION CARTOON: DONNA BARSTOW

How Do You Score?

A+ or Needs Improvement?

Knowing your credit score and how to boost it can save you thousands.

BY DEBORAH A. WILBURN



Most of us are familiar with credit scores. Ranging from 300 to 850, they are a sign of financial health and, to lenders, they indicate the likelihood that a consumer will be able to repay a loan. Any score above 700 is considered good, while scores below 600 tell lenders that, based on your past credit history, you may have trouble paying them back. A low score doesn't necessarily mean you won't get a loan—but if you're approved, you might end up paying a higher interest rate. That's why it's important not only to manage your money wisely, but also to know your scores. Even a difference of 60 or 70 points could cost you thousands of additional dollars in interest over the life of a loan.

The first step, then, is to find out what your scores are (you have three, issued by each of the three major credit reporting agencies—Equifax, TransUnion, and Experian). Although you can get some credit reports for free, you have to pay for credit scores. You'll need to order them through www.myfico.com, or call (800) 319-4433. Expect to pay about $16 each.

That said, there are general guidelines anyone can use to keep their credit rating high. Here are a few steps recommended by financial experts:

FIX ANY MISTAKES in your credit reports, because your score is based on the information in them. If something is wrong—for example, if one of the reports states that you've missed one or more payments, but you know you always pay on time—notify the agency so the error can be corrected. Note: You are entitled to a free copy of your credit report each year from Equifax, TransUnion, and Experian. To order, call (877) 322-8228 or go to www.annualcreditreport.com. It's important to check all three reports, because these agencies don't share data and a mistake in one may not show up in another.

MAKE PAYMENTS ON TIME. The most common way that people damage their credit is by not paying bills on time, says Gary Herman, president of Consolidated Credit Counseling Services Inc. in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. "Once a bill is 30 days late, it'll be reported to the credit bureaus," he says.

DON'T MAX OUT your credit cards. Owning several cards with balances near the limits will ding your score. "Ideally, balances should be no higher than 35 percent of the credit limit," says Herman.

DON'T CLOSE OUT old accounts and consolidate everything onto a new card. Demonstrating that you've managed an account over a long period of time is attractive to lenders. Don't be too quick to close out your oldest accounts, especially if you're a young educator with a fairly short credit history. Leave the account open, even if you're not using the card.

DON'T OPEN UP several new accounts at once. This suggests you may be having financial trouble.

www.neamb.com

Best Summer Travel Deals

Whether you're planning to get away this summer for some much-needed R&R, or sticking to business by traveling for conferences and training, remember that the best way to get the lowest airfare is by not following the herd. Traveling on Saturday, Tuesday, or Wednesday tends to result in the lowest fares, especially for those willing to board in the early morning hours or late at night. When it comes to travel search engines, everyone's heard of the biggies, like expedia.com and orbitz.com, but before locking in a fare, check out Kayak.com, which searches over 100 sites and offers alternatives like smaller airports outside of major cities. Mobissimo.com, another comprehensive site, also has a cool blog where armchair travelers can learn about wacky and wonderful things in the world of travel, including updates on the three man-made islands being built off the coast of Dubai, or Virgin Galactic—the world's "first commercial spaceline."

ILLUSTRATION TOP: ROB COLVIN; BOTTOM: STOCKDISC

Homes for Sale, Half Off!

Sound like a deal too good to be true? Actually, the offer is real, thanks to an initiative that's come about through NEA working in partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Called "Teacher Next Door," the program allows teachers to buy houses in revitalization areas—HUD-designated neighborhoods in need of economic and community development—where they teach, at 50 percent off the listed price. This program is a step in the right direction toward helping more educators realize the American dream of home ownership.

And we can do more. NEA is currently working with HUD to improve the program to include all categories of education support professionals (ESPs) and to expand the program in high-cost areas. For more information, go to www.nea.org/ref?3626.

How I Saved a Buck!

Christine Carlson, elementary school teacher, Stafford, Virginia

Over the years, I've collected sturdy, reusable (but not breakable!) plates, forks, and spoons to use in our kindergarten classroom. I have enough for a whole class set, plus extras. Now, whenever we have a class party or share a snack, I don't have to buy paper or plastic plates and utensils. Plus, we help the environment by not using disposable items. The kids also get to practice good table manners because they are using real items. (I bring them home and throw them in the dishwasher.)

Got a great way to save some cash at home or at work? E-mail ckopkowski@nea.org.

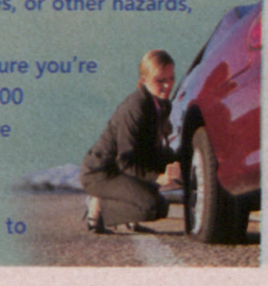
Is It Worth It? Road Hazard Warranty for Tires

You're about to shell out $300 for a new set of tires, so it's only natural to wonder if you really need to pay more for the extended warranty the salesperson is pushing. In most cases, no, but let's take a closer look. The insurance that comes with the tire usually guarantees that it will last for a certain number of miles—from 40,000 to 100,000, according to Eugene Peterson of Consumer Reports' Automotive Testing Center. Most manufacturers also guarantee that it will be free of defects for the life of the tire.

Extended warranties typically cover damage as a result of road hazards, punctures, and potholes. "That's it," says Peterson. The extended warranty may cover one year or the life of the tire, depending on the plan. Expect to pay about 12 percent of the cost of each tire. So on a $75 model, that would be an extra $9, or $36 for four tires. In some cases the coverage is offered for "free," but the seller increases the price of the tire.

When is it a good idea to spring for this type of coverage? Peterson suggests that personal experience may be the best guide. "If your tires have been damaged by roads a lot in the past, the added warranty may be a good thing," he says. But if you don't live in an area that is particularly prone to potholes, construction sites, or other hazards, you'll probably be OK passing this up.

If you opt for tire insurance, Peterson recommends making sure you're clear on how long the warranty runs, whether or not you'll get 100 percent reimbursement, and whether mounting and balancing are included in replacing the tire. Finally, find out what happens if there's a simple puncture—that is, whether the tire will be repaired or replaced. Armed with that knowledge, you'll be able to make the best decision for keeping those wheels rolling.



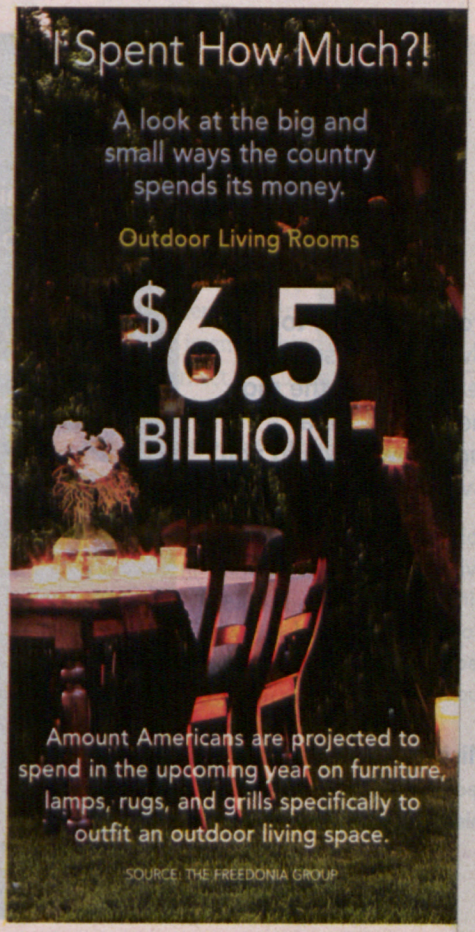

I Spent How Much?!
A look at the big and small ways the country spends its money.
Outdoor Living Rooms
$6.5 BILLION
Amount Americans are projected to spend in the upcoming year on furniture, lamps, rugs, and grills specifically to outfit an outdoor living space.
SOURCE: THE FREEDONIA GROUP

PHOTO TOP: NICK WHITE; RIGHT: MARTIN POOLE; ABOVE: XIMAGINATION

After the Fall

Two Oregon members went up a mountain as teachers—and came down with national headlines heralding their return.

AFTER A HORRIFYING 500-FOOT FALL off Oregon's Mount Hood in February, climbers Matty Bryant of Portland and Kate Hanlon of Wilsonville were lucky to be alive. But for more than 24 hours they, two other climbers, and Bryant's dog Velvet waited and wondered if they'd be rescued. They tried to stay positive, exercise, and tend to each other's injuries as well as possible.

Just a few weeks after their rescue, Bryant, who trains and mentors special education teachers, and Hanlon, an English teacher, returned to the classroom.

Velvet and Kate Hanlon

"It was very emotional at first," Bryant says. "I cried a lot when I saw friends and colleagues, realizing how much of an impact this incident had on so many people."

The duo and Velvet spent time visiting classrooms, talking about mountain safety and the volunteers from Portland Mountain Rescue, whom Bryant calls "incredible." Also incredible? Velvet, whom rescuers credit for helping save the climbers as she lay across them during the frigid night. The certified therapy dog, whom Bryant found wandering in the desert outside of Las Vegas on a hike years ago, will continue to work with students with behavioral issues. (She reinforces lessons on positive and negative behavior.) Bryant runs Velvet's new Web site—www.missvelvet.net—detailing the Mount Hood trip and raising money for the search and rescue groups that helped bring him and Hanlon home.

—MELISSA KEY

Matty Bryant

PEOPLE POLL

From television to the silver screen, superheroes are all the rage these days. What superpower would you love to have?

Ability to stop time—34%
Invisibility—32%
Mind reading—22%
Morph into animals/people—8%
Super strength—4%

Missed a People Poll?
See the results from all of this year's polls at www.nea.org/ref?3639.

Grandmaster Flashcard

A California math teacher learns that rap is a quick way into his students' memory banks.

WHEN MIDDLE SCHOOL students buy your music on iTunes, you know you're cool. Alex Kajitani, of Mission Middle School in Escondido, might not be topping the radio charts, but he's doing something potentially harder: making algebra cool for preteens. Kajitani says his rapping mathematician "was born out of survival," at a time when he struggled to motivate students. "At the same time, I noticed a rap song would come out on the radio on Monday, and on Tuesday they'd have it all memorized." He says his pupils probably considered him an unlikely candidate for local rap star status. But after he performed the first song one morning in class, he found them singing it later that day in the cafeteria.

His songs spread throughout the school district and he made a professional studio recording of his tracks. The CD has sold more than 1,000 copies across the United States, Canada, and Australia, and he's performed at a dozen venues. Not all of the songs are about math; some focus on character development. Kajitani hopes his music spreads and that students will convert "gettin' low" into getting math.

Find more information about his CD at www.mathraps.com.

—NADINE SIMPSON

PHOTO TOP LEFT: MATTY BRYANT; PHOTO TOP RIGHT: BRIAN TOMPKINS ; BOTTOM: EDUARDO CONTRERAS, *SAN DIEGO-UNION TRIBUNE*/ZUMA PRESS

Raising Cane

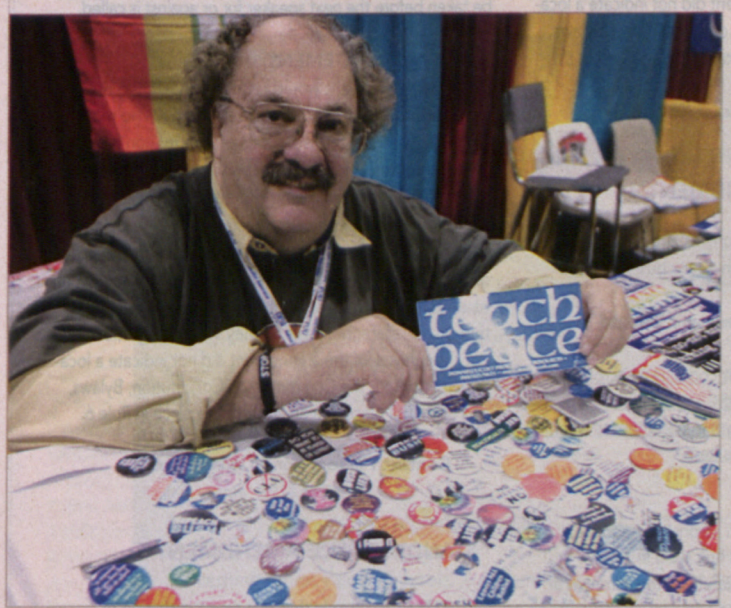
There's no better way for this Ohio guidance counselor to relax than by winding up reeds.

A-TISKET, A-TASKET, not many guidance counselors weave baskets. But Carolyn Abbey of Wellington High School in Ohio "fell in love with the art" after seeing a basket a friend had made. "I have knitted, cross-stitched, done some physical activities," she says, "and I have never done anything I've enjoyed more than this."

Her hobby has put her in connection with fellow basket makers and instructors from all over the world, through weaving classes and conferences. Abbey teaches the occasional class, too, for middle school students, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and even steel workers at a local plant. Some of her creations are small enough to be worn as necklaces and earrings, and others are so large, "you could probably sit down in one," she says. Typically, Abbey uses reed and cane, although her favorite basket is a mixed media artwork made of reed, copper wire, and handmade paper. Delicate materials aside, the baskets are far from flimsy. "Unless something's done to destroy them, they should last a person's lifetime or even through generations," she says. —NADINE SIMPSON

Teacher Without Borders

A New Jersey retiree aids in the recovery of a war-torn nation, one student at a time.



THE THOUGHT OF teaching in a country ravaged by war would turn most stomachs, but it's where retired history teacher Charles "Chuck" Reinhardt (New Jersey Retirees' Education Association) feels in his element. Since 2001, the former Highland Lakes educator has been teaching sociology, American pop culture, ethics, and conflict resolution in Bosnia.

"It was just horrible, the ethnic cleansing that went on there," Reinhardt says. "I wanted to help these people and prevent it from ever happening again." His classes at Zavadovići School blend Serbian, Croatian, and Muslim students in the hopes of stifling the hate and prejudice that claimed lives in the Bosnian War of the mid-1990s.

After teaching for 30 years in U.S. public schools, Reinhardt noticed major differences between American students and his Bosnian pupils. "After school there you sit down in the café, they sit down [and] converse, ask you questions," he says. "There, socializing with your elders is acceptable, encouraged. You really get a good insight into the kids."

—NATALIE MCGILL

GOT A TIP?

Do you have an interesting story tip? Contact Cynthia Kopkowski at **ckopkowski@nea.org**.

PHOTO TOP: JOE GLICK ; BOTTOM: SCOTT ISKOWITZ

The 2007 NEA Representative Assembly

This July, more than 9,000 NEA members elected by their state and local colleagues will gather in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for the annual NEA Representative Assembly (RA), July 2–5. The RA is the Association's highest decision-making body. Delegates will be voting on the proposed amendments listed below, as well as electing two members of the Executive Committee. You can find day-to-day coverage of RA debates and action by going online to www.nea.org.

NOTE: Proposed insertions of language are underscored; proposed deletions are shown in [ ].

Proposed Amendments to the NEA Standing Rules, Constitution, and Bylaws for vote by the 2007 Representative Assembly.

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 1

TITLE: To require that three (3) speakers for and three (3) speakers against any item being debated by the Representative Assembly be heard, provided a sufficient number of such speakers have called in, before debate on that item can be closed.

Rule 6. Order of Business and Debate
(no location given)
During debate on any item before the Representative Assembly, at least three (3) speakers for and three (3) against shall be heard, as long as such individuals have called in to speak, before debate can be closed.

IMPACT STATEMENT:
This amendment would change the rules governing debate on business before the Representative Assembly. Under the amendment, the presiding officer would be required to recognize at least three (3) speakers for and three (3) speakers against the item being debated (provided a sufficient number of such speakers have called in) before debate could be closed.

The current practice is for the presiding officer to recognize in rotating order delegates speaking for and against the item on the floor until there are no further requests to speak to the item, and to entertain a motion to close debate at any time. If all the delegates wishing to speak are on the same side of the item, the presiding officer may recognize several delegates and then, without objection, close debate.

The maker of the amendment did not indicate a location. If adopted, the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules will place it in an appropriate place in Rule 6.

Contact Person: Donald Wilms, Virginia

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 2

TITLE: To require that all points of information raised during Representative Assembly debate begin with the word "who, what, when, where," or "how."

Rule 6. Order of Business and Debate
(no location given)
All requests for points of information must begin with one of the following words: "who, what, when, where," or "how." Any request failing to meet the aforementioned criteria will immediately terminate recognition by the chairperson and the member's microphone will be shut off.

IMPACT STATEMENT:
This amendment would require all delegates seeking recognition for points of information during debate on the floor of the Representative Assembly to begin speaking with the word "who, what, when, where," or "how." The presiding officer would immediately terminate the recognition of any delegate failing to begin his or her remarks with one of these words. The delegate would not be afforded an opportunity to begin his or her remarks again. The amendment would not preclude a short introductory comment by a delegate (e.g., from the home of the Super Bowl champion).

The maker of the amendment did not indicate a location. If adopted, the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules will place it in an appropriate place in Rule 6.

Contact Person: Jack Tucker, Illinois

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 3

TITLE: To require that acronyms and abbreviations be spelled out when first used in a new business item.

Rule 6. Order of Business and Debate
(no location given)
Any new business item that contains an acronym or abbreviated term shall include the complete name for the acronym followed by the acronym in parentheses when it is first used in that new business item.

IMPACT STATEMENT:
Under this amendment, an acronym or abbreviation would be spelled out when it is first used in a new business item, followed immediately by the acronym or abbreviation in parentheses. The acronym or abbreviation could then be used alone in the remainder of the new business item. If the amendment is adopted, the NEA Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules would review new business items for compliance with this requirement at the time of submission.

The maker of the amendment did not indicate a location. If adopted, the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules will place it in an appropriate place in Rule 6.

Contact Person: Sue McGrory, Oregon

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 4

TITLE: To limit to three (3) the number of consecutive points of information that can be raised between speakers for or against any item that is being debated by the Representative Assembly.

Rule 6. Order of Business and Debate
(no location given)
During debate on any item before the Representative Assembly, a maximum of three (3) points of information will be taken before the next speaker for or against is called.

IMPACT STATEMENT:
This amendment would require that, during debate on any item by the Representative Assembly, no more than three (3) consecutive points of information be taken before the presiding officer recognizes the next speaker for or against the item being debated, regardless of the number of delegates seeking recognition for a point of information. Under the current practice, the presiding officer alternately recognizes speakers for and against an issue, but calls on all delegates with points of information on a preferential basis as they seek recognition.

The maker of the amendment did not indicate a location. If adopted, the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules will place it in an appropriate place in Rule 6.

Contact Person: Donald Wilms, Virginia

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 5

TITLE: To require that real-time captioning of Representative Assembly debate be displayed on all video screens and television monitors, including projection video screens.

Rule 6. Order of Business and Debate

D. The content of debate on any items for debate shall be displayed on all [available] screens, including projection screens, by real-time captioning.

IMPACT STATEMENT

This amendment would specify that the content of debate at the Representative Assembly be displayed via real-time captioning on all video screens and television monitors, including projection video screens.

Contact Person: Adia Hoag, California

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 6

TITLE: To require that a delegate who is recognized to speak may yield the balance of his or her allotted speaking time to another delegate only after speaking for or against the item being debated.

Rule 6. Order of Business and Debate

F. [A member may yield the microphone or speaking time to another delegate only for the unused portion of his/her allotted time.] A delegate may yield the microphone and the remainder of his/her allotted time to another delegate only after making an argument for or against the item of business being debated.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

This amendment would not allow a delegate who is recognized to speak for or against an item during Representative Assembly debate to yield the unused portion of his or her allotted time to another delegate until after he or she has made an argument for or against the item being debated. Currently, delegates need not themselves speak to the item being debated before yielding their allotted speaking time to another delegate. The amendment does not require the delegate to speak for any minimum amount of time, and presumably a very brief comment would satisfy this requirement.

Contact Person: Frank Cardella, Virginia

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 7*

Rule 10. Definition of Resolutions, Committee, and Procedure

D. State, Retired, Student, and At-Large Members

Amend second paragraph by substitution as shown below:

[Members shall serve for one (1) year commencing September 1. No person shall serve more than six (6) terms as a member.]

The terms of NEA state, at-large, and retired members of the Resolutions Committee shall be for three (3) years, and no person shall serve more than (2) terms as an NEA state, at-large, or retired member, except that NEA state and retired members may at the 2008 NEA Representative Assembly elect members for terms of less than three (3) years in order to establish a stagger, and such shorter terms shall not be counted toward the two-term limit. The terms of student members of the Resolutions Committee shall be for one (1) year, and no person shall serve more than two (2) terms as a student member. A state, at-large, or retired member of the Resolutions Committee shall immediately relinquish his or her position when such member ceases to be a delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly.

Contact Person: Brent McKim, Kentucky

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 8

TITLE: To treat as failed a Bylaw amendment that cannot be implemented without a corresponding Constitutional amendment.

Rule 11. Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules: Committee and Amendment Procedures

C. Constitution and Bylaws

2. Bylaws

(c) Bylaw Amendments Contingent on Adoption of Amendments to Constitution: A proposed amendment to the Bylaws which is dependent upon adoption of a proposed amendment to the Constitution shall be deemed to have failed unless the proposed amendment to the Constitution is adopted.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

This amendment would come into play when the Representative Assembly votes on an amendment to the Constitution and an amendment to the Bylaws that deal with the same subject matter. If adoption of the Constitutional amendment is required in order for the Bylaw amendment to be implemented, the Bylaw amendment would be deemed to have been defeated even if it receives the requisite majority vote unless the enabling Constitutional amendment also is adopted.

Contact Person: Jane R. Stern, Maryland

*The title and impact statement for this amendment were not complete at publication time. The amendment text may receive editorial changes.

Candidates Running for Office

Candidates for NEA Executive Committee (Two Positions)

CHRISTY LEVINGS

A quality public education is at the core of America's strength and an integral part of the promise of a free and democratic society. America's Constitution was written by leaders wise enough to know that the promise of a high standard of living for all is grounded in having an educated citizenry.

One hundred fifty years ago, NEA was formed to ensure a quality public education for all who come to the schoolhouse, regardless of where they reside and regardless of their background. It is a promise that strong and experienced NEA leadership must work to keep for our members, our students, and our nation.

PAULA MONROE

As educators we need to promote the joy of teaching and learning, not only for our students, but for our members as well. NEA, the premiere organization for children and public education, is the voice at the national level for all issues concerning Great Public Schools. A commitment to advocacy for members and to the schools where they work must be demonstrated by NEA Executive Committee Members as leaders of TEAM NEA. Positively influencing legislation, such as No Child Left Behind (ESEA) and the Social Security Offsets that impact our members is a priority. NEA will lead the way in ensuring a Great Public School for every student and every member.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 1

TITLE: To allow the NEA Bylaws to provide NEA membership for certain persons who are not education employees.

Article II. Membership
Section 2. Membership Eligibility: Provisions and Limitations

a. Membership, as provided in the Bylaws, shall be open to persons engaged in the profession of teaching or in other educational work and to persons interested in advancing the cause of public education, who shall agree to subscribe to the goals and objectives of the Association and to abide by its Constitution and Bylaws.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

This amendment would allow the NEA Bylaws to provide NEA membership for persons who are not education employees. The 2006 Representative Assembly amended Bylaw 2-1(a) and (g) to establish an Associate membership category for non-education employees who are "interested in advancing the cause of public education," and who meet certain other requirements. These Bylaw amendments have been held in abeyance, and cannot be implemented without Constitutional authorization. They will be implemented if this Constitutional amendment is adopted.

An NEA membership category open to non-education employees who were interested in advancing the cause of public education existed prior to the 1993-94 membership year. The 1993 NEA Representative Assembly amended Article II, Section 2(a), of the NEA Constitution and NEA Bylaw 2-1 to eliminate the category.

An identical amendment was defeated by the 2006 Representative Assembly.

Contact Person: Kathryn Valido, Wyoming

BYLAW AMENDMENT 1

TITLE: To place the statement of the NEA Core Values in the NEA Bylaws.

(no location given)

Core Values

These principles guide our work and define our mission:

a. Equal opportunity: We believe public education is the gateway to opportunity. All students have the human and civil right to a quality public education that develops their potential, independence, and character.

b. A Just Society: We believe public education is vital to building respect for the worth, dignity, and equality of every individual in our diverse society.

c. Democracy: We believe public education is the cornerstone of our republic. Public education provides individuals with the skills to be involved, informed, and engaged in our representative democracy.

d. Professionalism: We believe that the expertise and judgment of education professionals are critical to student success. We maintain the highest professional standards, and we expect the status, compensation, and respect due all professionals.

e. Partnership: We believe partnerships with parents, families, communities, and other stakeholders are essential to quality public education and student success.

f. Collective Action: We believe individuals are strengthened when they work together for the common good. As education professionals, we improve both our professional status and the quality of public education when we unite and advocate collectively.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

This amendment would place the statement of the NEA Core Values, as approved by the 2006 Representative Assembly, into the Bylaws. If this amendment is adopted, the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules would insert the language into Bylaw 1 as a new Section 1-2.

Contact Person: Curt Christensen, Wisconsin

BYLAW AMENDMENT 1-A

TITLE: To open Student membership to certain persons who are ineligible because they previously were eligible for Active membership; to allow, with the approval of the Executive Committee, persons who are eligible for both Student membership and Active membership to join in the former category.

Bylaw 2. Membership
2-1. Categories

c. Student membership shall be open to any student (i) who is enrolled in a postsecondary program that is preparatory for employment in a position that would make him or her eligible for Active membership or (ii) who is serving as chairperson of the NEA Advisory Committee of Student Members[, except that any person who has ever been eligible for Active membership through professional educational employment shall not be eligible for Student membership]. A student who is eligible for Association membership in both the Student and Active membership categories may, with the approval of the Executive Committee, join the Association as a Student member. Student members shall be eligible to be voting delegates at the Representative Assembly. Student members shall maintain membership in the state affiliate provided the affiliate has a membership category for student members.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

Under current Bylaw 2-1(c), a person is excluded from Student membership if he or she ever was eligible for Active membership because of his or her professional educational employment. This amendment would remove that exclusion. This amendment also would provide an express exception to the requirement in Bylaw 2-1(h) that a person who is eligible for more than one membership category join in the category that provides the greatest degree of governance participation. Specifically, under this amendment, a person who is eligible for both Student membership and Active membership would be allowed, with the approval of the Executive Committee, to become a Student member. The latter option has existed as a matter of practice since 1993 pursuant to an Executive Committee interpretation of Bylaw 2-1(h).

Contact: NEA Board of Directors

BYLAW AMENDMENT 2

TITLE: To clarify the effective date of membership for persons who join the Association for a particular membership year prior to the September 1 start of that membership year, and to clarify the eligibility of such persons to receive Association benefits and services.

Bylaw 2. Membership
2-5. Membership Year

a. The membership year shall be from September 1 through August 31. A person who is not a continuing member of the Association who joins the Association for a particular membership year shall become a member of the Association as of September 1 of that membership year, or the date on which he or she joined the Association, whichever is later.

b. If a person who is not a continuing member of the Association joins the Association for a particular membership year prior to September 1 of that membership year, and the school year that corresponds to the Association membership year begins for that person prior to September 1, he or she shall be eligible to receive the benefits and services of the Association authorized by the Board of Directors during the portion of the school year between the date that he or she joined the Association and September 1.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

The first part of this amendment (Bylaw 2-5(a)) reflects the current administrative practice: a person who is not a continuing member of the Association who joins the Association for a particular membership year would become a member of the Association as of September 1 of that membership year, or the date on which he or she actually joined the Association, whichever date is later.

If the school year of a person who joins the Association for a particular membership year begins prior to the September 1 start of that membership year, and the person does not become a member of the Association until September 1, he or she would be ineligible to receive NEA benefits and services during the interim. Under the second part of this amendment (Bylaw 2-5(b)), such a person would be eligible to receive such benefits and services as may be authorized by the NEA Board of Directors during that portion of the school year between the date that he or she joined the Association and September 1.

Contact: NEA Board of Directors

BYLAW AMENDMENT 2-A

TITLE: To make effective as of the 2007-08 membership year (rather than as of the 2009-10 membership year) a ten dollar increase in the dues of Active members to be allocated to the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises and Media Campaign Fund; to make said increase, and the one dollar increase in the dues of Student members, permanent.

Bylaw 2. Membership
2-7. Membership Dues

o. Beginning with the [2000-01] 2007-08 membership year [and continuing through the 2009-10 member-

ship year], the annual membership dues of Active members of the Association, as computed pursuant to Bylaw 2-7.a, shall be increased by [five dollars ($5.00) through the 2004-05 membership year; by six dollars ($6.00) during the 2005-06 membership year; by seven dollars ($7.00) during the 2006-07 membership year; by eight dollars ($8.00) during the 2007-08 membership year; by nine dollars ($9.00) during the 2008-09 membership year; and by ten dollars ($10.00) during the 2009-10 membership year] ten dollars ($10.00). This dues increase shall be allocated to the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises and Media Campaign Fund. The annual membership dues of Student members of the Association, as established pursuant to Bylaw 2-7.g, shall [be increased by] include one dollar ($1.00) [through the 2009-10 membership year. This dues increase shall be allocated to the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises and Media Campaign Fund] to be allocated to the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises and Media Campaign Fund.

Sixty percent (60%) of the money allocated to the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises and Media Campaign Fund during each membership year shall be available to assist state affiliates in dealing with ballot measures and legislative crises, and forty percent (40%) shall be available for national and state media campaigns to advance the cause of public education and publicize the role of the Association and its affiliates in improving the quality of public education.

Where necessary to avoid legal problems under state law, the Association and a state affiliate may, at the request of the state affiliate, enter into a written agreement providing that the money collected from members of that state affiliate shall not be used to deal with ballot measures, but shall be used only to deal with legislative crises and/or to fund national and state media campaigns. The Executive Committee shall develop guidelines to implement this Bylaw. These guidelines shall be submitted to the Board of Directors, and shall become effective when approved by the Board of Directors. The NEA president shall make a report regarding the operation of the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises and Media Campaign Fund, which shall include a financial statement, to [the 2001] each Representative Assembly [and each of the succeeding Representative Assemblies].

IMPACT STATEMENT:

During the current membership year, the dues increase for Active members to be allocated to the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises and Media Campaign Fund is seven dollars. This amount is scheduled to increase by one dollar in each succeeding membership year until it reaches ten dollars during the 2009-10 membership year. The dues increase terminates after the 2009-10 membership year. The counterpart dues increase for NEA Student members is, and remains at, one dollar through the 2009-10 membership year, and it also terminates after that year.

This amendment would eliminate the incremental annual dues increases and the termination date for Active members. A ten dollar dues increase for Active members would become effective as of the 2007-08 membership year, and would continue at that amount permanently. This amendment also would make permanent the one dollar increase in the annual dues of Student members.

Contact: NEA Board of Directors

BYLAW AMENDMENT 3

TITLE: To prohibit the inclusion into any Representative Assembly agenda of items, practices, or procedures that are likely to discriminate against any delegate.

Bylaw 3. Representative Assembly
3-5. Meetings: Location and Agenda

a. No meeting shall be held in any location where any delegates are likely to experience discriminatory treatment.

b. No meeting agenda shall include items, practices, and procedures that are likely to discriminate against any delegate.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

This amendment would add to Bylaw 3-5—which currently prohibits the Representative Assembly from meeting in any location where any delegates are likely to be subject to discrimination—a provision that would prohibit the Representative Assembly agenda from including any items, practices, or procedures that are likely to discriminate against any delegate.

Contact Person: Carole Robinson, Florida

BYLAW AMENDMENT 4

TITLE: This amendment provides a procedure for selecting alternate directors for at-large directors on the Board of Directors, and sets forth the circumstances under which such alternate directors would serve.

Bylaw 5. Board of Directors
5-6. Alternate Directors

a. (i) A state or the retired or student delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly may elect an alternate director to serve in the place of a state or retired or student director, as the case may be, who is unable to attend a meeting of the Board of Directors. The number of alternate directors need not equal the number of directors in a state or representing NEA-R or the number of student directors, but in no event shall any alternate director be designated to substitute for more than one (1) director at a meeting. An alternate director must be elected in accordance with the requirements set for the election of NEA directors.

(ii) If, pursuant to Article V, Section 1, of the Constitution, the Representative Assembly elects one or more at-large ethnic-minority, administrator, classroom teacher in higher education, or educational support directors, the unsuccessful candidate for at-large director in a particular category who receives the highest number of votes shall be an alternate director for the at-large directors in that category to serve in an at-large director's place if he or she is unable to attend a meeting of the Board of Directors. If the number of candidates for a category of at-large director positions is equal to the number of positions available and the election is waived, an alternate director shall not be selected for that category of at-large directors.

b. An alternate director shall be from the same educational position, or at-large category, as the case may be, as the director who is replaced.

c. Alternate directors shall be certified to the NEA president in the same manner and at the same time as directors.

d. Prior to the opening of a Board meeting, the president of the state affiliate or the president of NEA-R or the chairperson of the NEA Advisory Committee of Student Members, or the President of NEA in the case of an at-large alternate director, may request that the alternate director be seated by the Board of Directors if the director is to be absent from that meeting. Alternate directors shall have the right to vote and otherwise participate and shall assume all rights and privileges of the director replaced until the meeting is adjourned, except that they may not be elected to positions filled by and from the Board.

e. An alternate director shall not be a delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly by virtue of his/her seating as an alternate director at any meeting of the Board of Directors.

f. An alternate director temporarily may fill a vacancy in the office of state, retired, [or] student, or at-large director in accordance with requirements set forth in these Bylaws.

g. Service as an alternate director, whether prior to or following service as a state, at-large, student, or retired director, shall not be counted toward the two-term limit for any director position.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

In addition to providing for the election of State, Retired, and Student members of the Board of Directors, Article V, Section 1, of the Constitution provides for the Representative Assembly to elect at-large members of the Board of Directors to represent ethnic-minorities, administrators, classroom teachers in higher education, and Active members employed in educational support positions if the number of such directors elected through the regular election procedure falls short of specified levels. Bylaw 5-6 provides for the selection of alternate directors for State, Retired, and Student members of the Board of Directors, and sets forth the circumstances under which these alternate directors serve—but there is no provision in Bylaw 5-6 for the selection of alternate directors for the at-large members of the Board of Directors.

This amendment provides a procedure for selecting alternate directors for at-large directors. As opposed to other alternate directors, the procedure does not call for separate elections. The alternate director for the at-large directors in each category would be the unsuccessful candidate who receives the highest number of votes in the election for at-large director, and no alternate director would be selected if an election is waived for a particular category. Once an alternate at-large director is selected, he or she would serve under the same circumstances as other alternate directors.

Contact Person: David C. Hockaday, Michigan

NEA MEMBERS INSURANCE TRUST PLAN®

2005 SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT

(Trust Plan Year Beginning September 1, 2005)

The following is the summary annual report for the NEA Members Insurance Trust® Plan (Trust), Employer Identification Number 52-1126682, including information for NEA Life Insurance® Program, NEA Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance Program, NEA DUES-TAB®, and NEA MemberCare® Medicare Supplement Program for period beginning September 1, 2005, and ending August 31, 2006. The annual report has been filed with the Internal Revenue Service, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

BASIC NEA MEMBERS INSURANCE TRUST FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The value of Trust assets, after subtracting liabilities of the Trust was **$114,520,858** as of August 31, 2006, compared to **$102,107,421** as of September 1, 2005. During the Trust year, the Trust experienced an increase in its net assets of **$12,413,437**. This increase includes unrealized appreciation and depreciation in the value of Trust assets; that is, the difference between the value of the Trust assets at the end of the year and the value of the assets at the beginning of the year or the cost of assets acquired during the year. During the Trust year, the Trust had total income of **$91,834,413** including participant contributions of **$79,303,258**, realized gain of **$7,590,495** from the sale of assets, and earnings from investments of **$4,940,660**. Trust expenses were **$79,420,976**. These expenses included benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries, administrative and other expenses.

INFORMATION FOR NEA LIFE INSURANCE PROGRAM

The Trust has a contract with Minnesota Life Insurance Company to pay all NEA Preferred Term Life Insurance claims and The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all other NEA Life Insurance claims incurred under the terms of this program. The total contributions for the Trust plan year beginning September 1, 2005, and ending August 31, 2006, were **$40,989,405**.

Because it is a so called "experienced rated" contract, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. Of the total contributions made for the Trust year ending August 31, 2006, the contributions made under such "experienced-rated" contract were **$40,989,405** and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was **$35,412,630**.

INFORMATION FOR NEA ACCIDENTAL DEATH & DISMEMBERMENT (AD&D) PROGRAM

The Trust has a contract with The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all NEA AD&D claims incurred under the terms of the Trust. The total contributions for the Trust year beginning September 1, 2005, and ending August 31, 2006 were **$2,666,241**.

Because it is a so called "experienced rated" contract, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. Of the total contributions made for the Trust year ending August 31, 2006, the contributions made under such "experienced-rated" contract were **$2,666,241** and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was **$2,174,475**.

INFORMATION FOR NEA DUES-TAB PROGRAM

The Trust has a contract with The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all NEA DUES-TAB claims incurred under the terms of the Trust. The NEA DUES-TAB program is self-supporting and paid by premiums from the NEA Members Insurance Trust funds rather than from Member contributions. The total contributions for the Trust year beginning September 1, 2005 and ending August 31, 2006 were **$2,872,590**.

Of the total contributions made for the Trust year ending August 31, 2006, the contributions made were **$2,872,590** and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was **$2,662,484**. Benefits charged, less benefit claims paid, were **($61,915)** which is comprised of incurred but unreported claims and a pooled claim charge. Trust expenses, less benefit claims paid, were **$80,116** in premium taxes and **$182,689** in other expenses.

INFORMATION FOR NEA MEMBERCARE SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

The total contributions for the Trust plan year beginning September 1, 2005, and ending August 31, 2006, were **$12,640,230**. The total number of participants was **7,021**.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

As a participant, you have the right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof for a reasonable charge or you may inspect the Annual Report without charge at the office of NEA Members Insurance Trust, Attn: NEA Member Benefits, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 or at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C. You also have the right to receive from the Trust Administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the Trust and accompanying notes, or a statement of income and expenses of the Trust and accompanying notes, or both. The Administrator will state the charge, if any, of the specific document you request so you can find out the cost before ordering.

NEA Members Insurance Trust

resources

53 **Grants & Awards** Out from the shadows—an award shines the spotlight on parent groups.
54 **Educating Troubled and Incarcerated Youth** A new report from NEA offers ways to keep at-risk students from falling through the cracks.
55 **On the Web** Brush up on your labor history with these sites.
56 **On TV** A three-part PBS special examines the history of craft in America.
59 **Heads Up from NEA Member Benefits** Free expert help to cope with identify theft.
60 **In Print** Kids may want to skip the golden arches after they read this fast food exposé.
60 **Books by NEA Members** With *100 Paid Summer Adventures for Teachers*, there's no excuse for boring summers.
61 **Diversity Calendar** May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.
62 **Take Note** Apply for the 2007 Microsoft Innovative Teachers Forum.

Applications Are Due June 1, 2007, for The NEA Foundation Grants

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GRANTS provide $5,000 to improve the academic achievement of students by engaging them in critical thinking and problem-solving activities that deepen knowledge of standards-based subject matter. The work should also improve students' habits of inquiry, self-directed learning, and critical reflection.

THE NEA FOUNDATION
www.neafoundation.org

LEARNING & LEADERSHIP GRANTS provide opportunities for teachers, education support professionals, and higher education faculty and staff to engage in high-quality professional development and lead their colleagues in professional growth. The grant amount is $2,000 for individuals and $5,000 for groups engaged in collegial study.

Grants to individuals fund participation in high-quality professional development experiences, such as summer institutes or action research.

Grants to groups fund collegial study, including study groups, action research, lesson study, or mentoring experiences for faculty or staff new to an assignment.

Recipients will be notified by November 15, 2007. Grants fund activities for 12 months from the award date. All practicing K–12 public school teachers, education support professionals, and higher education faculty and staff at public colleges and universities are encouraged to apply.

Visit **www.neafoundation.org** today for more information, including guidelines and applications, or call **(202) 822-7840**.

HATS OFF TO PARENT GROUPS

Parent/teacher groups often toil in the background, performing odd jobs and working tirelessly to raise funds. Here's their chance to shine!

PTO Today—a company that helps parent groups serve schools—sponsors the Parent Group of the Year contest. Now in its seventh year, the contest shines a spotlight on the great work being done by parent groups across the country and is open to all parent organizations: PTO, PTA, HSA, PTC, etc.

The grand prize is a $5,000 cash award plus $3,000 worth of supplies from Educational Products, Inc. (EPI); the runner-up group receives a $1,000 cash award plus $1,000 worth of supplies from EPI; eight additional winners (one from each category) receive $250 in cash plus $300 in custom apparel from EPI; and every group that enters receives a certificate of achievement.

The deadline to apply is **May 31, 2007**. For more information and to apply online, visit **www.ptotoday.com/pgy**.

TOIL WITHOUT SOIL

The National Gardening Association is awarding 24 elementary, middle, and high schools a hydroponic gardening and indoor lighting system, along with curricula and activity books, as part of the 2007 Hooked on Hydroponics Awards.

To be eligible, schools must plan to garden hydroponically—using a bath or flow of highly oxygenated, nutrient-enriched water, rather than soil—with at least 15 students between the ages of 6 and 18 during 2007. Grant winners must also complete a year-end impact report.

For more details, including this year's deadline and an application form, go to **www.kidsgardening.org**.

PHOTO: GRZEGORZ REJNIAK

Educating Troubled and Incarcerated Youth

The statistics are sobering. Today, nearly a quarter of a million youth are in custody in public and private juvenile correctional facilities in the United States. Approximately 10 million children have a parent who has been imprisoned or under criminal justice supervision at some point in their lives.

The effects of incarceration, rarely considered by society, ripple well beyond prison walls into the homes and communities where families and children reside. Possibly even into your own community or classroom.

But there are solutions to this crisis, many of which are outlined in a new NEA report: **Education Opportunities and Concerns for Current and Former Prisoners.** This directory is geared toward NEA members who want to find entry points to support the education of prisoners or people coming home from prisons, or to expand their techniques for dealing with hard-to-reach youth populations. In addition to offering solutions to this far-reaching social problem, *Education Opportunities* profiles youth education services in juvenile justice systems around the country, includes a list of exemplary programs for educating youth during and after incarceration, reviews programs for non-incarcerated youth involved in juvenile justice systems, and discusses the impact of incarceration on children and families. Specific recommendations for educators include:

- **INCREASE** communication by informing incarcerated parents of their child's progress in school
- **AVOID** being judgmental
- **ATTEND** in-service training for dealing with the specific challenges of children of incarcerated parents
- **MAKE** arrangements for school-based support groups for children of incarcerated parents and provide for confidentiality of information and sensitivity of program participation.

Helping youth acquire education skills is one of the most effective approaches to the prevention of delinquency and the reduction of recidivism. Because education is critical to rehabilitation for troubled youth, it should be a priority in most juvenile institutions.

NEA has held workshops on judicial intervention and education/incarceration issues across the country at regional training seminars.

Download this latest report at
www.nea.org/ref?3646

PHOTO: LUKASZ OCIEPKA

On the Web

NEA JOINS CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING COALITION

NEA has joined forces with TiVo and other community groups to promote information about, and access to, quality children's television. "TiVo Teachable Moments Sponsored by the NEA" will offer parental tips and programming recommendations to millions of subscribers to TiVo's digital video recording technology and anyone with Internet access. Expert recommendations and tips from organizations like NEA will make it easier for parents to choose the shows that are best for their families. For more information, visit **www.tivo.com/kidzone**.

THE HISTORY OF LABOR IS ONGOING

Labor unions have a long and fascinating history in the United States. Delegates to NEA's 2006 Representative Assembly voted to encourage all Association members to learn more about labor, and to participate in its ongoing history by contributing materials to institutions dedicated to preserving labor's legacy. The American Labor Studies Center collects and disseminates curricula and other related materials for K–12 teachers. Visit them at **http://labor-studies.org/** and explore their many resources, including lesson plans, timelines, biographies, and more. The American Labor Museum maintains a Web site at **www.geocities.com/labormuseum**. Take a virtual tour of the museum and shop online for labor-related apparel, posters, and other items.

RACE—THE POWER OF ILLUSION

In 2003, PBS aired a three-part series on race in society, science, and history. At the companion Web site, explore race and ethnic diversity through a variety of interactive tools. Take a quiz to guess someone's race based on a photograph, or view a slideshow where people talk about how race affects them. This online resource will challenge you to examine your own assumptions, while educating you about human diversity. Go to **www.pbs.org/race/000_General/000_00-Home.htm**.

PHOTO: STOCK.XCHNG

Teaching Research Spotlight

If you're interested in what the research says about your profession, visit NEA's online venue highlighting professional research on best practices in educational issues. May's focus is **"Recruitment and Retention: Supporting and Retaining the Next Generation of Teachers."** Learn more at www.nea.org/ref?3644.

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On TV

SAVE OUR HISTORY: FRONTIER HOMES

History Channel, May 7, 6 a.m. ET/PT.
Discover how early American settlers created homes from meager resources, including the Pilgrims' post-and-beam houses, Swedish settlers' log homes, sod prairie houses, and Native Americans' desert adobe homes. Tape and use in the classroom for two years.

TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES

A&E, May 7–10, 4 a.m. ET/PT.
This four-part 1998 film adaptation of the classic Thomas Hardy novel features one of literature's best-loved and most memorable heroines. Tape and use in class for two years.

IF WE HAD NO MOON

Discovery Channel, May 18, 5 a.m. ET/PT.
This program looks at theories of the moon's origin and explains its importance to Earth's weather, gravity, rotation, and living creatures. Tape and use in class for one year.

COMBAT DIARY: THE MARINES OF LIMA COMPANY

A&E, May 24–25, 4 a.m. ET/PT.
This documentary provides a harrowing, firsthand account of life and death on the front lines of battle. Shot on home video cameras by Marines who were part of the hardest hit combat unit of the Iraq War, this Emmy-nominated special weaves digital camera footage with revealing interviews. Teachers are cautioned to screen the material before airing to middle- and high school-age students. Visit www.aetv.com/classroom.

IN SEARCH OF HISTORY: THE GREEK GODS

History Channel, May 25, 6 a.m. ET/PT.
Learn about the ancient Greek gods, including myths, artwork, and architecture, and their integration into modern life. Can be taped and used in the classroom for two years.

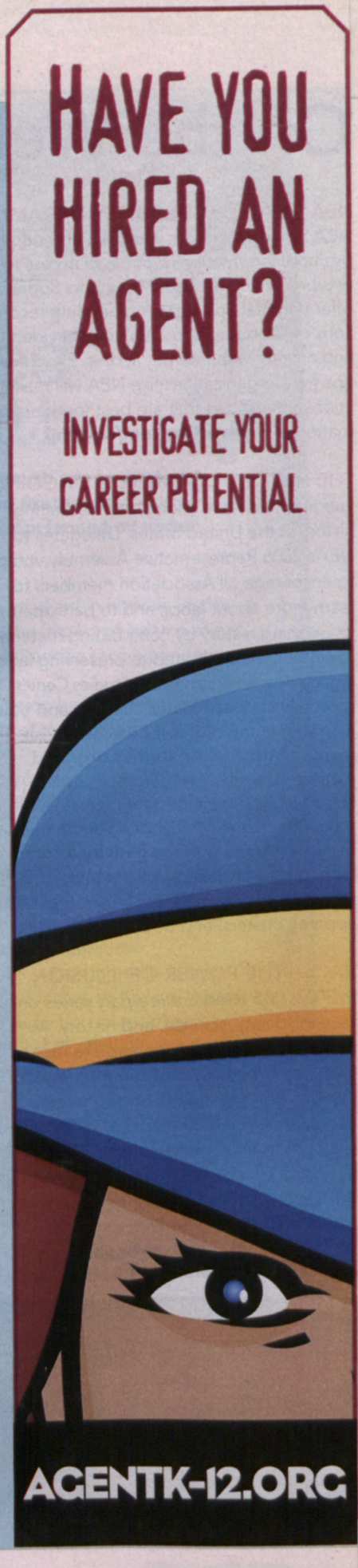
WILD PARROTS OF TELEGRAPH HILL

PBS/Independent Lens, May 28, 9 p.m. Check local listings.
A thoughtful, nearly homeless man, "occupying" a cottage on San Francisco's Telegraph Hill, finds himself caring for a flock of wild parrots. Mark Bittner feeds them, nurses them when they are sick, and slowly begins to document their behaviors, from their special "hawk" danger call to their unusual method of fledging their young. This documentary speaks to the social sciences as well as biology and ecology. For more, visit www.pbs.org/independentlens/wildparrots.

CRAFT IN AMERICA

PBS, May 30, 8, 9, & 10 p.m. ET/PT. Check local listings.
An homage to America for Memorial Day, these three episodes—Memory, Landscape, and Community—catalog U.S. history by looking at the functionality and beauty of everyday, crafted objects. From the Paul Revere bowl to the Sam Maloof rocking chair, it's all here, and possibly in a museum near you; a companion exhibit will travel to seven cities. Visit www.craftinamerica.org.

On TV listings are provided by KIDSNET, a national resource for children's media in Washington, D.C., www.kidsnet.org, and Cable in the Classroom Magazine at www.ciconline.org.



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THERE WERE OVER 23,200,000 DISABLING INJURIES IN 2004 (SOURCE: *INJURY FACTS, 2005-2006, P. 2*)

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES

In Print

THE FAST FOOD INDUSTRY REVEALED

If you've ever wondered what's in french fries or what life might be like for a chicken before it becomes a McNugget, *Chew On This* by Eric Schlosser (author of *Fast Food Nation*) presents an exposé of fast food that will fascinate children. They'll learn about mistreatment of animals, what consumption does to their bodies, and environmental impact. Ages 12+. 320 pp. $8.95 from Houghton Mifflin. Go to www.houghtonmifflin.com.

THE CASE OF THE LATIN NANCY DREW

Martika Gálvez's parents have separated and her dad and his girlfriend are already vacationing; she shares a tiny apartment with her Mom in a gang-filled neighborhood; and to top it off, she has nightmares about a jaguar and discovers she has unusual powers. Add a kidnapping that involves a Mayan statue, and in *Chasing the Jaguar,* by Michele Domínguez Greene, you've got a great summer youth read. Ages 12+. 240 pp. $16.95 from HarperCollins Publishers. Go to www.harperteen.com.

HEALING HELP FOR BROKEN HEARTS

Amy and Allie were eight years old and their brother, David, was four the night their dad died suddenly in his sleep. To help them cope, their mother suggested they keep diaries, and for two years they used them to sort out their thoughts, feelings, and confusion. The result is a record of their journey through time and grief. Any child who is grieving for a loved one will find understanding in *After You Lose Someone You Love: Advice and Insight from the Diaries of Three Kids Who've Been There*, by Amy, Allie, and David Dennison. For children and teens. 128 pp. $9.95 from Free Spirit Publishing. Go to www.freespirit.com.

ENCOURAGING ABILITIES AND INDEPENDENCE

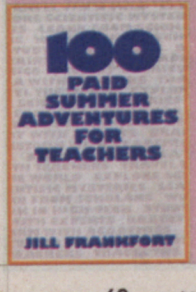
In *Mental Retardation Doesn't Mean "Stupid"* by Robert Evert Cimera, parents and teachers of developmentally delayed children will find advice to help them raise and educate able, independent citizens. Cimera dispels myths about retardation while looking at issues like social skills, education, maturation, and vocational options, and includes information about support groups and other resources. 296 pp. $26.95 from Rowman & Littlefield Education. Go to www.rowmaneducation.com.

BOOKS BY NEA MEMBERS

100 PAID SUMMER ADVENTURES FOR TEACHERS

By Jill Frankfort

Written to save teachers from hours of researching summer opportunities and programs, this comprehensive resource profiles diverse activities that range from touring Japan to working in laboratories of renowned scientists. It includes eligibility requirements for each program, application procedures, information on funding and course credit, and people to contact. In addition, each program is cross-referenced in several indexes. 173 pp. $19.95 from Benefit Press. Go to www.benefitpress.com.



HOPE

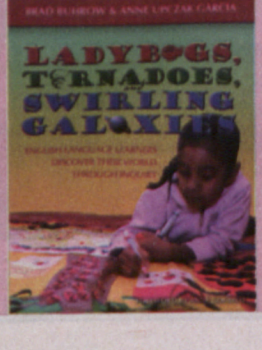
By Adam Eisenson

Written by a fourth-grade teacher and storyteller, this book is told through the eyes of Chantell, an average fourth-grader with friends, a good home, and not a care in the world. When she is paired to work on a project with Hope, a new student who tries to conceal the fact that she is homeless, Chantell learns about the devastating effects of homelessness and comes to understand the life she takes for granted. 127 pp. $14.95 from Lone Star Publications. Go to www.amazon.com to order.

LADYBUGS, TORNADOS, AND SWIRLING GALAXIES: ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS DISCOVER THEIR WORLD THROUGH INQUIRY

By Brad Buhrow and Anne Upczak Garcia

Filled with student artwork, this book demonstrates the role of art in ELL literacy and language acquisition. Through personal narrative and independent inquiry, students find meaning in science and social studies, and demonstrate their learning with extensive use of art. 187 pp. $22.50 from Stenhouse Publishers. To order, go to www.stenhouse.com.



WHEN MARION COPIED

By Brook Berg

Written by a library media specialist, this picture book introduces the consequences of plagiarism through the story of Marion, a good student who blithely copies from the Internet for a history paper. As a result, Marion and her classmates learn the proper way to make use of Internet material, and how to correctly cite their sources. Included are Library Lessons with suggestions for preventing plagiarism and alternatives to written reports, as well as templates for citation cards. Grades 1–4. 48 pp. $17.95 from Upstart Books. Go to www.highsmith.com.

Diversity Recipe

HAWAIIAN COCONUT MOCHI

With its origins in traditional Japanese rice cakes and other rice-based sweets, this Hawaiian treat is a bit like a chewy bar cookie. Then again, it's a bit like firm, dense custard. You'll have to make it and decide for yourself. Either way, mochi is *ono ono*—very delicious—as the locals would say.

You'll need *mochiko* (MOH-chi-ko), flour made from sweet, short-grained, glutinous rice. Try an Asian grocery or the international aisle in your supermarket.

Mochi can be made in many flavors and, with the addition of food coloring, a rainbow of tints. Search the Web for dozens of variations.

Ingredients

1 lb mochiko
2-1/2 cups white sugar
2 tsp baking powder
1 stick butter (not margarine), melted
1 can (13.5 oz) coconut milk
2 cups milk
4 large eggs
2 tsp vanilla extract
1 cup sweetened, flaked coconut plus more for topping
powdered sugar* (optional)

Preheat oven to 350° and grease a 9 x 13-in. baking pan.

In a medium bowl, whisk the eggs, vanilla, milk, and coconut milk.

In a separate, larger bowl, stir together the mochiko, sugar, and baking powder.

Pour the wet mixture into the dry and stir well to blend. Add melted butter and coconut. Stir until smooth. Pour into the prepared pan.

Bake for 1 hour (top will turn golden brown and develop a soft crust). Cool completely, then sprinkle with more coconut to taste. Cut into small pieces or squares.

Optional (recommended)—sprinkle cut edges lightly with powdered sugar* to keep pieces from sticking to each other. Wrap in waxed paper and store in covered container.

** Cook's note: If you're feeling adventurous, look for katakuriko (potato starch), a more authentic ingredient than powdered sugar.*

PHOTOS FROM TOP: ALLRECIPES.COM, PHILLIP COLLIER

DIVERSITY CALENDAR

MAY

MAY 5—CINCO DE MAYO
The anniversary of the 1862 Mexican victory over the French army at the Battle of La Puebla is more widely celebrated in the United States than in Mexico, where it is a regional holiday. (Independence Day—from Spanish rule—is observed September 16.)

MAY 9—NATIONAL SCHOOL NURSE DAY
NEA salutes school nurses this day and every day, including our 11,400 school nurse members! Visit www.nea.org/events/nurse07.html for more information.

MAY 17—ANNIVERSARY OF SCHOOL DESEGREGATION RULING
In its 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* ruling, the Supreme Court found racial segregation in public schools to be unconstitutional and in violation of the 14th Amendment guaranteeing equal protection under the law.

MAY 21—VICTORIA DAY
This Canadian national holiday honors the birthdays of Queen Victoria of England, and Queen Elizabeth II, the reigning monarch of Canada's constitutional monarchy.

MAY 22—INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
This day is dedicated to raising awareness of the danger to species from destruction of habitat and pollution. This year's theme is *Biodiversity and Climate Change*. Visit www.biodiv.org/programmes/outreach/awareness/biodiv-day-2007.shtml.

JUNE

JUNE 14—FLAG DAY
In 1770, the Continental Congress adopted the Stars and Stripes as our national flag. Visit the Library of Congress at http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/jun14.html.

JUNE 15—MAGNA CARTA DAY
In 1215, King John signed this important document, which outlined English liberties for the first time and became an early precursor to our own Constitution and Bill of Rights.

JUNE 19—JUNETEENTH
In 1865, General Gordon Granger went to Galveston Island and ordered all slaves set free. The day was made a state holiday in Texas in 1979 and is now celebrated in other parts of the United States. Visit www.juneteenth.com.

May—Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

Celebrate the history and accomplishments of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, a group with diverse histories, languages, and cultures. Some resources:

ASIA FOR EDUCATORS. This site offers rich content, including interactive timelines, historical maps, and an image gallery searchable by file type, time period, or unit. Go to **http://afe.easia.columbia.edu.**

ASK ASIA. This clearinghouse for K–12 Asian and Asian-American studies offers lesson plans, essays, maps, images, and more. Go to **www.askasia.org.**

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION FREER AND SACKLER GALLERIES. This site offers programs designed to foster better understanding of Asian art and culture using materials developed by classroom educators working with museum curators. Go to **www.asia.si.edu/education/default.htm.**

Take Note

The Perils of Pesticides

NEA HIN

Every day students and staff enter school buildings to work and learn. Unfortunately joining the ranks are unwanted pesky pests such as roaches, ants, wasps, and rats. Pests alone can cause structural damage and adverse health effects, such as asthma, but they also prompt schools to use pesticides, fungicides, herbicides, and rodenticides that can lead to other health problems such as eye and skin irritation, coughing, nausea, dizziness, and vomiting. To learn more about the health effects and how to reduce the presence of pests and pesticide use, visit **www.neahin.org**.

Innovative Teachers Forum

There is growing consensus that good teaching is even better when teachers have collegial support and opportunities for continual reflection, inquiry, problem-solving, and learning. Groups of teachers regularly engaged in this kind of work are the learning communities that make good schools great.

The 2007 Microsoft Innovative Teachers Forum recognizes outstanding examples of learning teams practicing the elements of 21st-century learning in their own professional education and then incorporating these skills into their classrooms. On September 27–28, the forum will bring together K–12 learning teams on the Microsoft Corporate Campus in Redmond, Washington, to share expertise, engage collaboratively with peers, and grow professionally through learning projects. To find out more and submit a proposal for your learning team, visit **www.microsoft.com/innovativeteachers**. The deadline to submit a proposal is **July 11, 2007**.

Magna History

The Contemporary Art Center of Virginia (CAC), along with the City of Virginia Beach and VB2007, is organizing an exhibit, sponsored by NEA, of five historical documents—the Magna Carta, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Emancipation Proclamation—in Virginia Beach.

In addition to the 1215 exemplar of the Magna Carta, representing the 1607 symbolic arrival of the Magna Carta into America at Virginia Beach, the exhibit will include a 1776 Dunlap broadside of the Declaration of Independence from the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia, as well as James Wilson's first draft of the U.S. Constitution from the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Also on display is a Lincoln-signed copy of the Emancipation Proclamation. A companion art exhibit, *By Our Heirs Forever: New Waves 2007*, will feature contemporary Virginia artists responding to the ideals set forth in the tenets of the Magna Carta. The documents will be on display until June 18, 2007.

NEA members will also be able to view the exhibit during the Association's Representative Assembly this July in Philadelphia.

May 8—National Teacher Day

As part of Teacher Appreciation Week (the first full week in May), thousands of communities across the country will take time on Tuesday, May 8, to honor local educators and acknowledge the invaluable contributions they make to our lives. While it takes many people for a school to succeed, National Teacher Day focuses on the teachers who work to make public schools great places for every student. Find resources to help you celebrate this event at **www.nea.org/teacherday**.

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EDUCATION MARKET

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Grant guidelines and application **www.teachingtolerance.org/neagrants**

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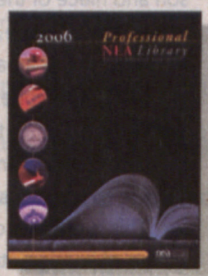

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The Best of Both Worlds

How we teach respect, confidence, and languages at the same time.

BY PILAR PINEDO

Jennifer is a bright, confident second-grader whose parents are both well-educated professionals. Yet I often see her seeking academic help from children whose parents are much farther down the social ladder.

That's because I teach in a two-way Spanish and English bilingual immersion program, which I believe brings out the best in our children and gives them excellent preparation for the world in which they will live. Our students learn half of the time in their native language and half in their second language.

"How do I say, 'I want a drink of water' in Spanish?" Jennifer asks her friend, Rose. And Rose, who's from Ecuador, immediately drops what she is doing to help. Another time, it will be Jennifer helping Rose with English. They're both learning languages, and learning to respect the expertise of someone from a very different background—a priceless experience.

"THIS IS THE WAY our nation of immigrants is supposed to work."

That's the strength of the two-way bilingual model: It brings together, on an equal footing, kids from very different socioeconomic backgrounds and cultures, teaching them to trust and depend on each other. They're a family.

Generally, it's best to start two-way bilingual education in kindergarten, although when necessary, we can make it work for children who start much later. Our students learn to read first in their native language and then in their second language.

Learning a new language is a major undertaking at any age. I adjust my instruction to the needs of each child. Some come from homes with plenty of books, and these students are often quick to pick up a second language without much scaffolding. But for others, school learning is a bigger leap. Their parents may never have gone to school in the country they left. I use their home language to ease their way into English. Sometimes I'll give them an outline in Spanish for the English-language lesson we're about to do, so they won't get lost in the middle and give up. And, in a two-way bilingual classroom, there are always plenty of English-speaking students around to help.

Getting extra help is comfortable for these immigrant children because they know that next period, they'll be the language experts.

Our immigrant parents love the program because it reinforces their cultural heritage while at the same time helping their children learn English. They know many of their children's teachers are well-educated, Hispanic or Spanish-speaking professionals, providing strong role models. And they feel comfortable coming into the school because they find people there who speak their language. Parents who speak little English can ask me to explain their child's homework assignment without the embarrassment of stumbling over unfamiliar words.

Our English-speaking parents know they, too, are providing a wonderful opportunity for their children.

Last year, the award-winning Yarina Ecuadorian music ensemble performed at our school because the son and niece of the group leaders were our students. It was amazing to see everyone from kindergartner to principal dancing and singing to their music.

This is the way our nation of immigrants is supposed to work—benefiting from what immigrants bring with them, while integrating them into American culture.

When I was a young girl, the American-born daughter of Colombian immigrants, some people thought it was harmful for a child to try to learn two languages at once. Fortunately for me, my parents rejected that view. They wanted me to be bilingual, so they spoke to me in Spanish while I learned English from my older siblings and friends. In our changing world, my parents' wisdom becomes more evident every year.

These days, when the stock market crashes on the other side of the world, it crashes here the next day. Everybody is thinking globally. Giving our children a bilingual education is one of the best ways to act locally.

Pilar Pinedo teaches English-language arts in the K–7 UNIDOS program of the East Somerville Community School in Somerville, Massachusetts. Students' names have been changed. For links to pedagogical resources for English-language learners, visit **www.nea.org/ref?3627**.

PHOTO: PATRICIA McDONNELL

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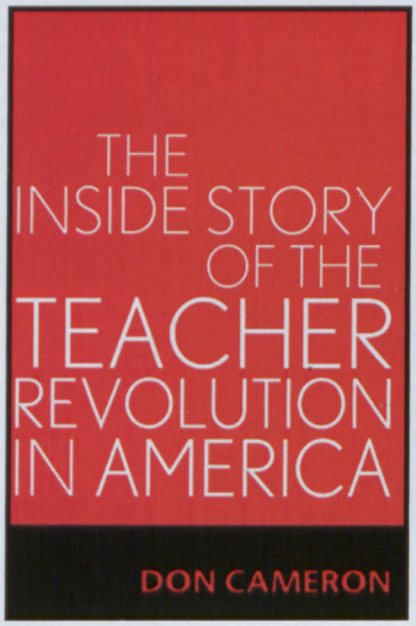

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